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THE ETHICS OF THE GOSPEL
AND
THE ETHICS OF NATURE

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The Ethics of the Gospel

and

The Ethics of Nature

BY

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D.D.

53074

Garden City, New York

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.

1928

First published . . . *October 1927*

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE EDINBURGH PRESS 9 AND 11 YOUNG STREET, EDINBURGH

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THE manuscript of this book was found, corrected for publication, among Professor Scullard's papers. The Student Christian Movement very gladly responded to the suggestion that they might publish it, not only as a memorial volume of Dr Scullard and his life-work, but also as a valuable contribution to Christian thought. The whole system of Christian Ethics has now to stand the fire formerly directed mainly at the Theology of Christianity. This learned and living volume, with its uncompromising apologetic, should prove of no small service. The publishers are grateful to Dr Garvie for his Preface.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

"THE Rev. Herbert Hayes Scullard, M.A., D.D., Professor of Church History, Christian Ethics, and the History of Religions at Hackney and New College, University of London, was born in 1862, the son of the Rev. H. H. Scullard, who was a Congregational minister for more than fifty years. He was sent to Pembroke House School, Lytham, and went on to the Lancashire Independent College. At Owens College (now Manchester University) he obtained distinction in many subjects, including modern philosophy, ethics, political economy, psychology, and logic; while at London University he graduated M.A. in mental and moral science in 1885; B.D. in the first division in 1903; and D.D. in 1907, being the first Nonconformist to obtain a D.D. degree at any English University. Meanwhile, he had gone up to St. John's College, Cambridge, where he was foundation scholar, Hughes exhibitioner, Naden Divinity student, and Greek Testament prizeman. He was placed in the second class in the Theological Tripos, Part I, 1888, and in the first class in Part II, 1889. In 1890 he was Hulsean University prizeman.

"For six years Dr Scullard was pastor of York Street Congregational Church, Dublin, and afterwards of the Howard Church at Bedford, of which John Howard, the philanthropist, was a founder. He wrote a study of Howard's life, a book on St. Martin, the Apostle of Gaul, and 'Christian Ethics in the West,' in addition to essays in 'Christ and Civilisation,' and 'London Theological Essays,' and articles in the *Quarterly* and other reviews."—Extract from *The Times*, 23rd March 1926.

PREFACE

THE Rev. H. H. Scullard, M.A., D.D., was for nineteen years my colleague, and it is my sad task in this preface to offer a tribute of gratitude, appreciation and esteem to his memory. The subjects on which he lectured in the College were Church History, History of Religions, and Christian Ethics, and he also did tutorial work in Psychology and Ethics. In the discharge of his duties he was most conscientious, and read very widely in the relevant literature to keep himself abreast of the latest knowledge of each subject. He was most considerate and courteous in his dealings, alike with his fellow-teachers and his students, and was always ready, when asked, to undertake any extra work. Although very reserved, he made the impression, and exercised the influence, of a devout and consecrated Christian personality of the distinctively Evangelical Nonconformist Protestant type, conservative in his Theology and Ethics. Of this impression, derived from personal intercourse, this posthumous volume offers confirmation. On critical questions about the Bible he followed, as his conclusions show, a path of his own, not that which is common. Whether his views commend themselves or not, they must be treated with the respect due to careful study and earnest thought. He was most at home, however, in the history of the Church, and especially of Christian Ethics, and it is here that his most valuable contribution to Christian thought has been made.

ALFRED E. GARVIE.

New College,
London, 14*th May* 1927.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

SOME years ago the members of the Teaching Staff of Hackney and New Colleges gave various courses of lectures to Nonconformist Ministers in London. It fell to my lot to undertake three short courses on the same mornings as the late Principal P. T. Forsyth, who usually remained and enlivened the subsequent discussions in his illuminating way. Towards the close he suggested that I should turn the lectures into two books.

I have waited long before acting, at least partially, on his suggestion. The lectures have been entirely rewritten and more than half of the chapters in this volume have little or nothing corresponding to them in the earlier outlines. The difficulty of condensing material derived from so wide a field will be best appreciated by those who have made similar attempts. So much has to be left out, if the volume is to be kept within moderate limits, or prevented from becoming little more than a list of names and authorities. Many references to ancient authors, and to modern scholars, whom one would like to have mentioned, have had to be passed over. In this way the writer has frequently deprived himself of the pleasure of being in good company, and possibly may sometimes have given the impression of greater divergence than would have been the case, if other names had been mentioned, or fuller quotations given, or ampler commentary seemed possible.

The book is written from what seems to me to be the Evangelical and Apostolic position. But the presentation and interpretation of the Gospel in interaction with the changing conditions of time and place and circumstance are likely enough to reveal the limitations of one's knowledge of things both divine and human. Yet this in itself is not

an adequate reason for silence. In the writing of history, and especially of religious history, points of view are both inevitable and desirable, and completeness is an impossible dream.

It is now nearly forty years since the writer's interest in Christian Ethics was first aroused in the class-rooms of Adamson, Westcott and Gwatkin; and during about half that time he has had opportunities, by teaching and by constant association with colleagues in the Theological and Philosophical Faculties of London University, of learning how varied may be the interpretations put upon the same facts and how valuable is the frank expression of opinion in matters where final judgments are impossible. But the highest qualifications for appreciating the Apostolic Gospel can be given by no University: and in view of the "vanishing away" of great masses of critical, scientific and philosophical knowledge now going on, the desire "to comprehend with all the saints" the meaning of "the Kingdom which cannot be shaken" grows stronger.

On the wide path of love divine,
Guide me into all truth of Thine.
Before this Cross of Thine so dear
Help me to find love's victory near.
Deeds that offend
For ever mend.[1]

H. H. S.

[1] Bernard of Clairvaux, *Salve, Jesu, pastor bone*, translated by H. Grimley.

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THE ETHICS OF THE GOSPEL AND THE ETHICS OF NATURE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

IT is not my aim in this book to attempt a formal history of Christian Ethics; nor to reduce to a system all the moral truths which have any claim to be regarded as specifically Christian; still less, entering the field of Christian casuistry, to decide in doubtful cases what is or is not the Christian's duty. It is rather to draw attention again to those fundamental principles of Christian morality, which have distinguished it most clearly from all other types of ethical theory—principles which have puzzled many of its nominal adherents and offended its most determined critics, but which have nevertheless given to it an amazing vitality and are the guarantee of its ultimate victory.

The need for restatements of this kind will hardly be denied. Both outside and within the Churches much uncertainty and confusion exist as to the grounds of morality and as to the difference between the Christian way of life and all others which claim to be right and good. A few Theosophists and others, unaccustomed to face the facts of life, may tell us that all moralities are alike, and a few well-meaning Christians, wearied with the conflicts of dogmatic theologians, may cherish a happy illusion that all are agreed on questions of ethics. But most of us know that these things are not so.

When J. S. Mill wrote his book on Utilitarianism, about sixty years ago, he maintained that the question of the

criterion of right and wrong was still a matter of controversy, and that little progress had been made towards its solution for more than two thousand years. Apart from a growing appreciation of the doctrine of morals contained in the Bible, there is much to be said for Mill's contention. It will, I think, find support in any careful review of the course of moral philosophy; and the discussions of the last sixty years would seem to have removed us still further from a unanimous conclusion. So great is the variety of opinions on the ultimate ground of the moral life, that the question is forced upon us, whether a solution is possible without the help of the facts of the Christian Gospel. It may be that the agelong controversy of the philosophers and the modern ethical confusion are due to a reluctance to face the facts of history and of experience. Abstractness has been the bane of moral philosophy. Its progress has been continually hindered by the ruling out of relevant facts. The scope and data of moral science have been misconstrued. This is the reason why in the twentieth century so eminent an authority as Professor Dewey can say: "Our science of human nature in comparison with the physical sciences is rudimentary." [1]

Among those who have been greatly impressed by the modern ethical chaos we may mention Eucken. Some years before the war broke out, he wrote: "Present-day civilisation in spite of all its great achievements has no inner solidarity of conviction, no thought-world which embraces the human soul, no dominating ideal of life. Accordingly, it cannot ground morality in the core of our being, nor give it a form corresponding to the stage of world-historical development and work." And elsewhere he said: "Whereas man was once held responsible before the bar of morality, now it is morality that has to justify itself before men—the old-time judge now stands in the dock." [2]

These are very serious words; and if it be said that they were written from a philosophical rather than religious

[1] *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 3.
[2] *Collected Essays*, pp. 71 and 55.

standpoint, we may supplement them by the opinion of Troeltsch, who said: "This same moral system is also effectively without any religious foundation, and instead of that is underpinned with a utilitarian individualistic philosophy of life, which resembles religious faith only in its belief in the harmony of interests, but supports even this belief rather on a universal law of nature than on a religious conviction." [1]

If these testimonies are true, modern civilisation is not based on any religious foundation, and the dominant types of current philosophy are not Christian. It is, of course, possible that men may be building better than they know, but they are not consciously shaping their own characters or constructing society according to any pattern shown them on the Mount of God. So far as modern civilisation is based on any intelligible foundation, it is being reared, according to Troeltsch, on the kind of philosophy which J. S. Mill did so much to popularise, the utilitarian. And even that philosophy is only regarded as a temporary makeshift to prevent complete collapse. It is "underpinning" rather than foundation. If anything untoward were to happen to the principle of utility, the vast fabric of our modern life would be overthrown. Dimly conscious of this, men have sought to find a religious justification for utilitarianism or for the instincts which have demanded its aid. But they have not found it.

Troeltsch's diagnosis of the modern situation—utilitarian individualistic philosophy resting on a universal law of nature—has a notable point of contact with the opinion, expressed many years ago by an eminent English Church historian, Edwin Hatch, that the ethics of Christendom were Stoic rather than Christian.[2] Both descriptions agree in basing morality upon universal natural law. And although the word "utilitarian" may seem foreign to the purer forms of Stoicism, there is yet another resemblance

[1] *Protestantism and Progress*, p. 181. *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. II, pp. 1, 552, etc.

[2] Hibbert Lectures, 1888, p. 170.

in the emphasis of each upon the individual will. In spite of the utilitarian appearance there is much to justify the contention that the substructure of the partially Christianised nations of modern Europe is prevailingly Stoic. It is egoism, based on a universal law of nature, confessing human brotherhood, but emphasising individual rights.

The influence of Stoicism both upon individuals and societies has certainly been one of the strongest of the many creative forces which have together made our modern civilisation what it is. This has been partly owing to the appeal which it made, first to the nobler elements of the old Roman character, and afterwards to the manly independence of the Northern peoples. But it has also been partly due to its alliance with current forms of Christian belief. Very early in the history of Christianity the leaders of opinion in the Churches thought that they discovered a family likeness between Christianity and Stoicism. A Stoic, like Seneca, seemed to the "Father of Latin Christianity" as "often one of us." Lactantius, Jerome and Ambrose, among others, showed how congenial to them were many things in the Stoic philosophy. The greatest heresy in the West, Pelagianism, derived its popularity from the fact, that it appealed to the qualities in human nature that had already received their rational justification at the hand of the Stoics; and its acceptance in a modified form by the Council of Trent and the subsequent eclipse of Augustinian theology are evidences of the compromises which official Catholicism has thought it desirable to make. Still greater has been Stoic influence upon constitutional law and upon the policy of Western Christendom. Mediæval society was grounded upon the Stoic-Ciceronian idea of a universal law of nature. And though at the Reformation other influences became more manifest, Stoic ideas and Stoic habits were too deeply fixed in the minds of individuals and in the constitution of States to be thrown off. It is hardly too much to say that the modern world as a whole has not yet discovered the essential difference between the Kingdom of God and the Stoic *Civitas*.

This will not appear altogether strange, when we remember the apparent points of contact between the two rival systems of thought—the emphasis on the value of the individual, on the freedom of the will, on the idea of brotherhood, on the superiority of virtue to all kinds of outward good, and on the conception of the moral world as a rational order. Minor differences might easily be forgotten in the presence of so much that the two have in common: and our greatest English moralist—though a bishop—is excused for neglecting the most important words of his Christian text and using it simply as a starting-point from which to preach good Stoic philosophy.[1]

And yet in fundamentals Christianity and Stoicism are poles asunder. The one is a religion of grace; the other the religion of proud self-confidence. The one makes God-in-Christ the centre of the universe; the other is frankly egoist. The Christian believes that he is dependent upon God, not simply for the outward goods of life, but for the origination, maintenance and development of the truly moral life; the Stoic says with Cicero: "Men confess that they have obtained prosperity from the gods; no one ever alleges that he received a virtue from God."[2]

Any moral theory which professes, like Stoicism or like Rational Utilitarianism, to base itself upon a universal law of nature is worthy of consideration, and is certain to receive it, in a scientific age like the present. But other moral theories have had their influence on modern civilisation. Idealisms and romanticisms of various kinds have contributed to the fullness of life in the world around us, and these may seem to some to come nearer to the Christian standpoint than utilitarian, stoic or pragmatic theories. Very specially has the prevalence of naturalistic habits of thought affected the modern approach to moral problems.

[1] See later, p. 189.

[2] *De Nat. Deor.*, III. 36, cf. Horace, a Roman of another school: "Det vitam, det opes, æquam mi animam ipse parabo," Ep., I. 18, 112.

The analytic method, so useful in natural science, has been applied to a realm of knowledge where it is much less valuable, and that so rigorously as to conduct men away from the fullness and concreteness of the real and living. It is more particularly in contrast with this dominant tendency, and with what seem to me to be its disappointing results, that I wish to develop the significance of Christian Ethics, and reaffirm the incomparable superiority and fruitfulness of the Biblical method.

Other tendencies besides those suggested in the previous paragraph are manifest in the society around us, and a moral theory which professes to be Christian has to reckon with them all. But it must not be identified with any. It would be a mistake to speak of any moral doctrine which rests on them alone as definitely Christian. They do not imply any Christian view of the universe, nor of the moral subject, nor of the greatest good, duty and virtue. If the soul of man, as Tertullian said, is naturally Christian, the fact can hardly be said to be proved by the moral theories, which profess to be based upon its affirmations. These all fall short of the ethics of Christianity. Isolated points of resemblance to Christianity, which emerge in the presentation of idealistic and naturalistic schemes, must not be allowed to obscure the fundamental inability of the natural man to frame a Christian theory of ethics. Here and there might be found a naturalistic moralist who could accept the illustration, which Tertullian offered in proof of his assertion that the soul was naturally Christian, namely, the testimony which the soul spontaneously and instinctively gives to the existence of God. But if Theism is a fact disclosed to the natural man, it only takes us to the borderland of Christian Ethics, and those who quote Tertullian in favour of the naturally Christian nature of the soul should not forget that he also said that a man is not born a Christian, but becomes one. The two assertions are not so contradictory as they appear to be, because the old and new creations, though distinct, are the work of one God.

We have, however, only to turn to the works of the moral philosophers to see that they have not based their ethics upon the same facts as the Christian moralist uses. It would be as unfair to speak of Spinoza or Kant or Spencer or even Butler (in his *Sermons on Human Nature*) as Christian moralists, as it would be to say that the Apostles or their Lord based Christian conduct merely upon the facts of human nature and of the universe, which were patent to every one. Christianity is not a mere republication of natural religion. Truer would it be to say that natural religion finds its main, if not sole, justification in the facts brought to light in the Gospel.

Any one at the present time who seeks to defend the ethics of the Gospel, can point to the fact that no rival system of morals has succeeded in securing the general assent of thoughtful men. Present-day civilisation is torn asunder by conflicting theories of life and unable to find a sure foundation for morality either in the nature of man or within some larger whole of which man forms a part. Every new scheme of the universe and of man, every restatement of the old philosophies in terms of modern thought, is the signal for friendly debate or violent controversy. No one philosophy holds the field. If the Christian moralist wished to forgo his claim on behalf of the Christian view of life, there is no one competent to receive the act of surrender. There is no undisputed master of the field of thought.

The advocates of Christianity do not expect an easy victory for their philosophy of life. It is not exempt from the inevitable reactions of individual, sectarian, social and racial prejudice. From the first, as in the case of every other proposed solution of practical problems, it has been assailed by ridicule and argument. It is, indeed, far less likely than others to escape opposition. The Christian way of life still appears to be folly to Jews and Greeks, to the wise and the unwise, for it involves a doctrine of the Cross. The Christian explains the old creation by the new, and that again by the sacrifice and victory of Calvary. This pro-

cedure excites both moral antagonism and intellectual dislike. It assumes that man is morally wrong, and that his intellectual constructions are without foundation. It is as obnoxious to Positivism as to Stoicism. The Christian doctrine means that man as an individual or as a totality is not the measure of the universe, and that "Nature," interpreted apart from the Christian facts, is only the fragment of an empty shell. To a world which confesses itself unable "to ground morality in the core of our being or in any thought-world which embraces the human soul," it dares to say, "that is because you have made man the centre of the moral universe and mistaken an abstract scheme of 'Nature' for the sum total of reality."

I am using the word "Gospel" in preference to "Christian" for two reasons. In the first place because it is more Scriptural and therefore keeps us in closer touch with our sources. The word "Christian" is rarely used in the New Testament, and was not brought, in the formative period of Christianity, into intimate association with the facts and truths of the new religion. There is only one passage which may be thought to give it Apostolic sanction as the designation of the way of life adopted by the disciples of Christ: "If any man suffer as a Christian," [1] and even this may refer to the public rather than the Apostolic habit of speech. Within the inner circle of the Christian community other names — disciples, believers, saints, brethren—were preferred, and this word "Christian" was not brought into the context of Apostolic sentiment and doctrine.

But it was far otherwise with the word "Gospel." This was in general and no doubt in universal use throughout the Apostolic Age. It is found among the sayings of Jesus. It occurs also in each of the periods which Professor Bacon has called the Pauline, the Aramaic Enclave, and the Deutero-Pauline.[2] The noun is much more common in the Epistles of Paul, but the corresponding verb is more

[1] 1 Peter iv. 16. [2] *Jesus and Paul*, p. 12.

frequently used elsewhere. Putting noun and verb together, there are about eighty occurrences in the Pauline Epistles and fifty outside. The books in which neither of the words occur are Titus, 2 Peter, Jude, James and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles. But other compounds of ἀγγέλλειν occur, and no one I suppose denies that the tidings were thought to be good. From first to last the new religion and the new manner of life are associated with the Gospel. The word conducts us at once through its numerous and intimate associations into the heart of the New Testament revelation. Sometimes it is spoken of as "the Gospel of Christ," or "the Gospel of God," or "of the Kingdom of God," or "of the Grace of God," but more often simply as "the Gospel." So well-defined was the word in the Apostolic Age, and so competent to bear the full weight of the Christian message, that no further description was necessary. It stands out in all its simplicity, dignity and authority as "the Gospel." It is the essential thing in Christianity. A man cannot become a Christian, or follower of Christ, until he has become obedient to the Gospel of God.[1]

And a second reason for the preference is that the word "Gospel" has had on the whole a much better history than the word "Christian," due no doubt in part to the fact that it had a better start. There have of course been caricatures of the Gospel, even within the Christian Churches. But the word has not been conventionalised and degraded quite to the same extent as the word "Christian." Worldly-minded persons have been much more afraid of the word "Gospel" than of the word "Christian," and have not so often appropriated it. Many have thought that they could be respectable Christians while ignoring the Gospel. Ecclesiastical institutions in which the Gospel was rarely preached have been unhesitatingly described as Christian Churches. Kings and kingdoms, worldly to the core, have been spoken of as "most Christian." And the phrase

[1] Even to Simon Peter Jesus said: "Thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards," John xiii. 36.

"Christian Ethics" has shared in the general corruption of the word. It has been made to cover all forms of moral theory hospitably entertained by prominent Churchmen, or adopted by Christian communities. Theories have found a place within organised Christianity, which were plainly hostile to the Christian way: others which merely play upon the surface of New Testament teaching and do not rest upon the foundation principles of the new life. But "the Gospel," amid all its manifold perversions, has always retained something of its original charm. It has not been institutionalised, secularised, conventionalised to the same extent as the more favourite but less fortunate "Christian."

There may also be some advantage in using the word "Gospel," because it reminds us of two facts regarding Christianity which need special emphasis in a description of the Christian teaching regarding life. It is revelation rather than philosophy, announcement rather than speculation, news of something that has taken place rather than conjecture as to what is yet to be. And it is good news.

Christian ethics rests upon a historical foundation. Other systems do not do so in the same way. For the most part they are based upon the phenomena of human conduct as observed and interpreted by the philosopher, or they are deductions based on *a priori* grounds with comparatively little appeal to historical facts. In either case, whether they have simply to do with what is or with what ought to be, they do not bring the phenomena or the maxims into close relation with any specific historical event or happening, natural or supernatural, as the Gospel does. The truths of morality have merely a conventional significance; or they are derived from the general experiences of the race, so far as this is ascertainable; or they are regarded as eternal truths of reason independent of all historical occurrences. But the ethics of the Apostolic Age were based upon the news of something that had happened, upon the death and resurrection

of Jesus Christ. By His victory over sin and death Jesus had achieved something which furnished an infinitely surer ground for morals than the arbitrary conventions or varying experiences or conflicting reasonings of mankind. This was the greatest revolution that has ever taken place in moral theory. Has it been justified by its results ? Is it intrinsically more reasonable as well as more powerful ?

And the news was also, to those who received it, " good news." No other way of life can compare with the Christian in its gladness. It is well to have that made plain at the start by the very words we use. Gospel ethics are raised above all others by this striking characteristic. The Way of the Gospel is a way of joy. As Matthew Arnold said, it was the gladness of Christianity that made its fortune. How poor a thing was Nietzsche's Dionysiac fury compared with the calm, joyous confidence of the Apostolic company ! How different the restless will-to-power from the grateful acceptance of power from above, which enables the humblest Christian to accomplish more than the greatest genius ! If a philosophy of life is to be judged by its power to get things done and to make men supremely happy in the doing of them, the ethic of the Gospel is easily first. No form of will-worship, whether ascetic or licentious, and no striving after happiness, whether egoistic or utilitarian, has been able to produce the note of triumph, which runs through the New Testament presentation of Christian morals. Even the five books which Emmet regarded as more Jewish and less Christian than the rest, *Matthew*, 2 *Thessalonians*, 2 *Peter*, *Jude* and *Revelation* are no exception.[1]

Considerations such as these may not be regarded by every one as sufficient to justify the substitution of the word " Gospel " for " Christian " in the title of the book. So much depends upon our point of view ; and I am content at present if those who love the vaguer and more popular form of speech will look upon the other as a variant, and

[1] *The Lord of Thought*, p. 248, Dougall and Emmet.

weigh its merits and defects. All I maintain is, that it is a better description of an ethic which rests upon the New Testament.

But it may be asked, why not "the ethics of Jesus"? It is avoided because of possible misunderstanding; for I do not mean what the modernist critic means by the teaching of Jesus. The latter seeks by a careful study of texts to get back through Synoptic and pre-Synoptic sources to the actual teaching of Jesus; and, when that has been found, many would say that such a portion of revelation, whether large or small, possesses an altogether peculiar and transcendent importance. I do not myself think that there is any finality or much satisfaction to be obtained along that road; and I believe that the preference for the earlier teaching of Jesus is neither rational nor Scriptural. In the first place the critics have not decided among themselves in how many instances we have the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus Himself, nor do I see any prospect of a unanimous finding. But, even if agreement along such lines were possible, why assign a unique value to the earlier drafts of the teaching? Is the elementary teaching given in the parables to the multitudes to be preferred to the more intimate teaching which Jesus gave to His disciples? Or were the first words He spoke to His disciples more valuable than the last? Such conclusions sound very strange as coming from those who think that even during the period of His public ministry Jesus advanced in wisdom and knowledge. But they are contrary to what we know of the methods of all the best teachers. And, what is more important, they are contrary to our sources of information. Jesus did not say everything at once. The revelation which He imparted was conditioned by the needs and capacities of His hearers. No one understood during His earthly lifetime the meaning of the deepest things of His kingdom. Even at the last He told His disciples that He had many things to say, which they could not yet receive. Repeatedly in the Gospel of John the disciples and others are represented as having fallen into errors of understand-

ing, which received correction on subsequent occasions.[1] To affirm that Jesus during His earthly ministry said all that He had to say is contrary to all the evidence we have. Post-Pentecostal teaching through His Spirit is not less truly His than any which could have been taken down by reporters in Galilee, or treasured in the memories of men as yet unilluminated by the Holy Spirit. "Jesus above the heads of His reporters" is a sound principle to adopt. Jesus waited to be understood. He also waited to speak. But the voice which did not say everything on earth has spoken from Heaven. And according to the Epistle to the Hebrews it is the same Jesus as He who talked to the multitudes by the Sea of Galilee or to His disciples in the upper room. And so thought others in the Apostolic age. By no principles of criticism, which do not do violence to the Sources themselves, can we include the Sermon on the Mount in the Ethics of Jesus, and exclude the moral teaching of Jesus as given by Paul and Peter and John.

One could wish that we had heard the last of the conventional distinction between the Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith. It has been accepted as a commonplace for more than a generation, and now, owing to the failure of the Liberal-Jesus-School to present even a tolerable picture of what was called the Jesus of History, ought to die a natural death. Some years ago one of the ablest of German scholars, Professor Loofs, revealed the condition of impotence to which that school had been reduced on the confession of its leading representatives, Julicher, Weinel, Heitmüller, and Julius Wellhausen.[2] It is not possible to produce a credible picture of the historical Jesus, except by making use of, and giving credence to, the testimony of men who believed Him to be more than man. The Jesus of History was the Person who revealed Himself most clearly both before and after the Resurrection to chosen

[1] Bishop Gore in *Belief in Christ*, p. 110, mentions four instances, ii. 22; viii. 27; x, 6; xii. 16.

[2] *What is the Truth about Jesus Christ?* p. 77.

witnesses. The most faithful witnesses to the historic Jesus were not those whose eyes were closed, and whose hearts were so hardened that they saw no beauty that they should desire Him, but those who could penetrate beneath the surface, and see in the form of the Servant the grace and truth and glory of God. To speak of the testimonies of the unbelieving as giving us a true Jesus of history, and testimonies of the believers as giving us some non-historical person called the Christ of Faith, would be unreasonable. It is those who are in sympathy with a person who see him as he actually is. Only a man with some artistic feeling is competent to appreciate the work of an artist. Only a man of moral and spiritual insight, that is of faith, could see Jesus as He actually was. For a faithful picture of the historical Jesus we have to turn to those who believed. The baneful influence of post-Humian views of objectivity and historicity is still, in spite of some promising recent developments, all too evident in many writers. The competent witness is the witness who relies on the testimony of his senses, and on nothing else. Sentience becomes the one test of truth and actuality. The historical is the phenomenal, and the phenomenal is that which appeals to the senses. All else is merely subjective. It is not "experience," but only the interpretation of experience. It has no objective value.

This tendency counts for much in the case of many of those who tell us that the Synoptic narratives are objective history and the Fourth Gospel something else. But why something else? It is the eye-witness, who by previous preparation and especially by careful subsequent reflection most successfully counteracts the partiality and vagaries connected with all sensuous experience, who can best tell us what actually took place in any given historical happening. The spectators of the great events of our Lord's life came away with different impressions. The Pharisee, the publican, the disciple, the penitent, did not see the same things or see them in the same way. Subjectivity, too, is usually more operative and lively the nearer men are to

an event and the more sensibly they are stirred by its recency. It is just then that a man's limitations, negligences and ignorances are most in evidence. A complete, unbiased, and correct account of events or objective history is often only possible after much reflection. And, if it be said that memory may occasionally deceive and reflection introduce what is extraneous, it is equally true that memory may reproduce unnoticed elements in the original experience, and so correct the mistakes into which our senses inevitably lead us, when in a perceptive experience a few features of the total fact monopolise attention and the part is mistaken for the whole. Whatever else objective history may or may not be, it is certainly not a mere record of immediate impressions, still less of immediate sensuous impressions.

Nor did Jesus cease to be the Jesus of History, when He ascended up on high. The Apostles had a truer view, not only of the Person of Jesus, but also of the meaning of history, when they placed Him at the beginning and at the end, as well as at the centre of the world's life. The word " super-historical " as applied to Jesus Christ suggests a Deist conception of God and an abstract idea of history, which find no support in the Bible. The historical character of Jesus was more fully revealed after the Resurrection even than it was before. A more unfortunate antithesis could hardly have gained currency. There is no opposition between History and Faith or between Jesus and the Christ.

It may make a little clearer some things which appear in the following pages if I confess how unable I am to accept such a view of history, and of the Apostolic witness to the Jesus of History, as I find in a recent work by Professor Peabody, a name familiar to all students of Christian Ethics.[1] It does not appear to me that the Christology of the Pauline Epistles is " unhistorical " ; nor can I follow that able scholar in his relative disparagement of the Apostle's treatment of the humanity of our Lord—a disparagement not

[1] *The Apostle Paul and the Modern World*, pp. 164–5.

simply as compared with the Synoptic presentations, but also with the "stately affirmations" of the Apostles' Creed.

If doubts as to the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles prevent any from regarding the words, "who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession"[1] as genuinely Pauline we may leave them out of the case, for are not such expressions as "born of a woman," "born under the law," "born of the seed of David according to the flesh"[2] as explicit with regard to the humanity and historicity of Jesus as the three "stately affirmations" of the Apostles' Creed? The constant and emphatic references to the sufferings and death of Jesus, as well as the account the Apostle gives of the Last Supper, make even the testimony of the Creeds to the humanity of Jesus appear meagre and formal. And why should we be content with such an impoverished view of human nature as is implied in the silence of the Creeds with regard to all the higher attributes of the humanity of Jesus and in the over-anxious pre-occupation of some theologians with the lower? Jesus was not simply or mainly human because He grew in stature, or was hungry, or expressed surprise. These things do not constitute the specific and peculiar attributes of our common humanity. We share these things with the lower creatures. Jesus was essentially and in the noblest sense human just because He possessed those moral qualities which the Apostle Paul describes as the fruit of His Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance.[3] It was these things, shining through "the likeness of sinful flesh,"[4] which revealed the complete humanity of Jesus. What we have in the Creeds is not "a corrective" of the assumed tendency of the Apostle to neglect the historical and the human, but a mere scheme or outline, which in comparison with the Pauline presentation is deficient in human, that is moral, features. For the

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 13.
[2] Gal. iv. 4; Rom. i. 3; 2 Cor. viii. 9, etc.; 2 Tim. ii. 8.
[3] Gal. v. 22. [4] Rom. viii. 3.

real "man Christ Jesus," and for our knowledge of the "full-grown man, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" we turn away from the Creeds to the Apostolic Epistles.[1] Even the Synoptic Gospels have not given us a more human and historical Jesus.

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 5; Eph. iv. 13.

CHAPTER II

THE GOSPEL ETHIC AS FORESHADOWED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE apostles, prophets and evangelists of the New Covenant to whom was first entrusted the presentation of the Ethics of the Gospel were for the most part of the Hebrew stock. Some of them were considered by the authorities to be " unlearned and ignorant men." [1] Others, they could not but see, were men of culture, however perverse their interpretations of Jewish history might appear. But all of them were familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures, which Jesus used to illustrate and support His teaching. The Old Testament, therefore, naturally becomes the line of approach to the study of the Ethics of the Gospel.

The great revolution which has taken place in men's ways of regarding the Old Testament is part of a much wider movement, which has affected all historical and scientific study, the application of the evolutionary hypothesis to the facts of nature and life. Religion, it was said, could not be exempt from a law which seemed to obtain everywhere else. Those who began to take an interest in theology before the close of the nineteenth century felt the full force of this movement, and some of them perhaps so thoroughly adapted their thinking to the supposed requirements of the time, that they are now finding it difficult to give full weight to the creative as contrasted with the evolutionary aspects of the Divine activity. Theological thought has not always kept pace with the movements of modern biology and psychology. A strong reaction has

[1] Acts iv. 13.

already set in against the unscientific presuppositions involved in much Biblical criticism. Revelation is not such a simple process as some of the critics have made it.

The categories of physical science have often been introduced with little discrimination into theology. Terms designed to express one order of facts have been transferred to another quite different realm. Men have spoken, for example, of " mechanical " and " dynamical " theories of inspiration, as though they were not both open to the same objection of falsifying, that is of materialising, the facts of religious experience. Such terms do not properly describe any religious person's theory of inspiration, still less the Biblical view. Human minds never act in that kind of way, why then should we suppose that the Divine mind so acts ? It is a pity that theologians, of all others, should either hold on to the billiard-table theory of mind, or find in an automobile a fitting illustration of its processes. Inspiration is neither mechanical nor dynamical.

And the resort to biology is not much better. Development, as understood by Herbert Spencer or the modern biologists, is inadequate to express the process of Divine revelation. And so also is the creative evolution of Bergson ; for mind is more than life, even as life is more than mechanism and force. All biological ideas and metaphors fall short of the truth as applied to human psychology. And shall we be content with such terms when we speak of the intercourse of the Divine and the human ?

The method of the Divine approach to the souls of men is an ultimate mystery, and something, therefore, which we can never fully explain. All metaphors drawn from the natural sciences, whether mechanical, dynamical, chemical, or biological, are inadequate when we enter the region of personality. The influence of the teacher on the taught, or of the mother on her child, cannot be expressed in any terms known to biology, the highest of the physical sciences. How, then, by the use of such terms can we explain or properly describe the influence of the Divine Spirit upon the mind and heart and conscience of man ?

There is one assumption which seems to underlie the view of inspiration held by many thoughtful persons at the present time. It is that violence is done to human personality if men cannot at once perceive the meaning of the Divine revelation. It is a recoil no doubt from ecstatic or "mechanical" views of inspiration. But why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should commit to the keeping of men truths the significance of which they do not fully understand? It is not generally thought that we do violence to the personality of a child in telling him much that only subsequent experience can make real to him. All knowledge begins in mystery. All evolution is from the vague to the definite. Does God endanger moral personality if the world which He reveals to the infant's mind is in the words of William James "a big blooming buzzing confusion," and the child cannot at once distinguish the thrush from the hawthorn bush in which it is singing?[1] On the contrary, is it not true that the only way in which we can learn anything is by being told more than we can understand? John Ruskin lived to be supremely grateful to his mother for teaching him the 119th Psalm, though to his childish mind it proved to be a very irksome and largely unintelligible lesson. Was the mother adopting a non-moral method and doing violence to the personality of her boy?

All God's sayings are "dark sayings" to the natural man. They may be "opened upon the harp,"[2] or expressed in parables, or reflected "in a mirror darkly"; but to the end of life "we know in part and prophesy in part."[3] So said the Apostle, who confessed that he "would rather in the Church speak five words with the understanding than ten thousand words in a tongue."[4]

God does not always wait till we can understand. Job did not understand the Divine solution of the problem of suffering; but, after God had spoken and His presence had been manifested, his troubles vanished.[5] Simon Peter,

[1] *Text Book of Psychology*, p. 15.
[2] Psalm xlix. 4.
[3] 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 9.
[4] 1 Cor. xiv. 19.
[5] Job xlii. 5.

taught of God that Jesus was the Christ, showed at once that he did not understand the meaning of the revelation.[1] John the Baptist, one of the greatest of the prophets and son of a priest, declared that Jesus was "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,"[2] a most appropriate confession for him to make. But did he understand it? The confession is a great stumbling-block to those who hold that prophecy is never prediction, and to those who imagine that a prophet must always understand the full import of what he says. So the authenticity of the saying is often denied. In the same way the other confessions recorded in the first chapter of John's Gospel are challenged. How, it is asked, could Andrew and Philip and Nathaniel (Peter is not said to have made any confession at the time) have confessed the Messiahship of Jesus when Peter seems to make his confession for the first time so much later at Cæsarea Philippi, and then in ignorance of its import and with the command of Jesus not to publish the fact abroad? Andrew and Philip and Nathaniel, we are told, could not have confessed Jesus at that earlier period and in the terms recorded. But why not? Is it not conceivable that the first time they found themselves in the presence of Christ they were so impressed by His transcendent greatness, that they used the highest words of which they could think to describe Him. Men often speak better than they know. None of us realises the full value of the better things we say and the better things we do. We are at such moments taken at least a little way beyond our habitual selves. The simple child and the brilliant genius often give expression to truths beyond their comprehension. Is it mere hearsay, mere mechanical repetition, mere subconscious activity? Or is there behind it all the Spirit of the Living God, speaking a little in advance of the understanding of the listener, as every other teacher finds it necessary to do? The idea of a revelation waiting for and depending upon human development needs to be supplemented by the idea of a revelation which forestalls and makes possible that

[1] Matt. xvi. 23. [2] John i. 29.

development. If it is permissible to speak of creative evolution in the world of nature, why be offended by the idea of creative revelation in the world of mind? "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."[1] No word of His is void of creative might. "Oh fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."[2]

It is generally allowed that the inspiration of the Old Testament is most clearly seen in its foreshadowing of the Gospel. It is known to be inspired not simply by its effect upon us, but because of its connection with Christ and His redeeming work. Jesus Himself said that each of the three parts into which the Old Testament was divided contained references to Himself, and that the Scriptures testified of Him. And the New Testament writers have given us such ample evidence of the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy that we need not stay to strike a rough average between, let us say, the *Demonstratio Evangelii* of Eusebius and the much more meagre residuum which the critics would allow us.

The unanimity with which all writers of the New Testament see in Jesus the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy shows how thoroughly they had appropriated this part of the teaching of their Lord. But it is not always recognised how fully they concur in the explanation which they give. It is the pre-existence of Jesus, the actual presence of the Son of Man making itself felt in and through the words of the prophets and the experience of the race, so that, in the words of Augustine, "the whole Hebrew nation was God's prophet because the prophet of the Highest."[3]

Among the sayings which support this view the Gospel of John records the words of Jesus, "Before Abraham was I am" and the remarkable assertion that Abraham "rejoiced to see His day and he saw it and was glad."[4] Two interpretations of these words have been regarded as possible by thoughtful students of the Bible. Some have held that a

[1] Matt. iii. 9.
[2] Luke xxiv. 25.
[3] *Adv. Faust.*, XXII. 24.
[4] John viii. 56, 58.

supernatural vision of future events was granted to Abraham in response to his faith. Others have thought that the words may mean that Abraham's faith was itself the proof that he lived already in that world to which Jesus belonged. In either case they show the close association of Jesus and Abraham. Jesus Christ, the captain and leader of faith, was already present in if not to the faith of Abraham. The vision and the faith are explained by the presence of the Son of Man.

In another chapter there are words which may be taken as supporting the idea of the existence of the Son of Man and His co-operation with the Father through the long stretches of time back to a period before creation. "My father worketh even until now and I work."[1] If we may take that as the view of Jesus with regard to the course of human history, and I think we may, we shall appreciate better the unity of the Bible. He who was in the bosom of the Father and came forth to declare Him was ever working with Him, in the giving of the Law and the redemption from Egypt as on the Mount of Beatitudes or in the greater redemption of the Cross.

And it is not the Fourth Gospel only that refuses to limit the influence of Jesus Christ to the earthly ministry. According to Peter it was "the Spirit of Christ" who testified in the prophets of the earlier dispensation.[2] The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that Moses suffered "the reproach of Christ."[3] Paul, using and correcting a rabbinic tradition to illustrate his belief that Jesus Christ was with His people in the wilderness wanderings, said that it was no material rock, but a spiritual rock, even Christ, that followed them.[4] And in the Epistle of Jude, according to one reading, we find the remarkable statement, that "Jesus having saved a people out of the land of Egypt afterwards destroyed them that believed not."[5] Passages such as these, taken from five to six different sources, show how common this view of the influence of Jesus Christ upon what we call pre-

[1] John v. 17. [2] 1 Peter i. 11. [3] Heb. xi. 26.
[4] 1 Cor. x. 4. [5] Verse 5, margin R.V.

Christian history was in the Apostolic Age. It was also the opinion of men in the sub-Apostolic Age, representing such widely different tendencies of thought as *Barnabas* of Alexandria and Ignatius of Antioch; the latter declaring that the prophets not only believed in Jesus Christ, but were also saved by their union with Him.[1]

It is no part of my design to discuss the theological problems raised by these assertions. It is enough at present that they are in the sources, and that they support the idea of the fundamental unity of the Bible more adequately than some modern theories of development. The unity implied in an advancing revelation is not that of mechanical aggregation, nor is its significance made clearer by dynamical metaphors. It is not one simply of a growing organism. It is the unity of personal fellowship with One who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and who having life in Himself becomes the light of men.

The unique relation of Jesus Christ to the world, which is clearly revealed in the New Testament, is foreshadowed in the Old. God was felt to be in the world as the centre and source of its life, and yet in some sense in human-wise. The anthropomorphism of the Old Testament stands for something which is neither crude nor foolish; for the truth that the Divine and human are not incongruous, that God was never, so to speak, non-human, but from the beginning of creation was drawing men to Himself "with the cords of a man and with the bands of love."[2]

This conception of the kinship of God and man dominates the Biblical view of nature and history. The powers of nature are not mere forces. They are the words and acts of One who in process of time became manifest, through the Incarnation. The dim premonitions of psalmists and prophets were fulfilled in Him who, even in the form of a servant, seemed to those who knew Him to be the Lord of nature and of men. "Upholding all things by the word of His power when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high."[3]

[1] *Philad.*, VIII. [2] Hosea xi. 4. [3] Heb. i. 3.

To discuss the theology implied in a saying like this, taken from an Epistle which is often appealed to as evidence not only of the human sympathy but also of the human limitations of Jesus, is not possible here. I am simply trying to state what the New Testament writers thought to be the meaning of the older revelation, as seen in the light of Him who had become to them the resurrection and the life. In thinking of their Lord they did not begin at Bethlehem. As Hebrews, as companions of the Lord and of those who had seen Him in the flesh, as those who lived in the creative period of the new religion and who succeeded, among other wonderful deeds, in making the Old Testament part of the Bible of Christendom, they have a right, apart from any particular theory of inspiration, to be heard on questions of Hebrew thought. Before any of us say they were wrong, it would be seemly for us to produce similar credentials. If we had as vivid a realisation of the glory of Jesus as they had, we might find Him, where they found Him, at the heart of all revelation however fragmentary both in the world of nature and in the providential guidance of the race, as well as in the earthly career which revealed "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." [1]

The effects of including the essentially human within the wider idea of perfect Deity were very manifest in the sphere of ethics. The world created and pervaded by such a God must needs be good for man to dwell in. There is hardly a trace of asceticism in the Old Testament. What little there was arose from the sense of vocation as in the case of the Nazarite, or from dislike of idolatrous associations as in Daniel. There is none of the false asceticism which springs from the idea of the evil of matter or the corrupting influence of the finite. One of the greatest merits of the Hebrew religion was that it moralised the idea of holiness. In spite of the tremendous influences against it, heathen ideas of taboo, ceremonial uncleanness, and all the externalism of the natural man, the ethical idea of purity triumphed. When Jesus "made all meats clean" [2]; when

[1] Col. ii. 9. [2] Mark vii. 19.

Paul said "to the pure all things are pure"[1]; or when Peter recognised that the voice which said "What God hath cleansed make not thou common"[2] was the voice of God, they were true Israelites, interpreting the essential meaning of the Old Testament revelation, fulfilling the teaching of prophets and psalmists, who saw that religion was truth and righteousness and purity "in the inward parts."[3]

The Hebrew idea of God, just because it was more moral, was more human than that of any other nation. The God of the Old Testament, though "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders"[4] is a very human God. It might be too much to say that the weird and grotesque and monstrous lie entirely outside the range of the imagination of the Hebrew. But the world was to him full, not of "Gorgons and Hydras and Chimeras dire," but of the riches of God. It was only in the visions of the night, such as came to poor Job in his afflictions, that leviathan was really a terrifying beast. When he recovered from his bewilderment and fear, we can almost see the smile on his face, as he hears God saying, "Wilt thou play with him as a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?"[5] Job had only to realise that the world belonged to God and not to himself to lose all fear of leviathan. When he had been shaken out of his self-centred little universe, he could feel that leviathans were only playthings in the hands of the Almighty. He came out at last, I think, into the serener mood of the psalmist, who saw the huge creature frolicking in the sea as innocently as the ships on its surface or the conies on the rocks.[6] It feeds out of the hand of God. Why should man be afraid of it? "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."[7] "The sea is His and He made it."[8]

This view of the universe as belonging to a God infinitely holy and yet completely human is characteristic of the best Hebrew thought. There is nothing like it in the earlier

[1] Titus i. 15. [2] Acts xi. 9. [3] Ps. li. 6.
[4] Exod. xv. 11. [5] Job xli. 5. [6] Ps. civ. 26.
[7] Ps. xxiv. 1. [8] Ps. xcv. 5.

religions of the world, still less, apart from Christianity, in the later. Polytheistic religions abound in anthropomorphisms, but one religion only, the religion most indebted to the Hebrew nation, has ascribed all authority in heaven and earth to the Son of Man. The development elsewhere has been in the opposite direction. Varuna, the most moral and therefore the most human of all the Gods of the Vedic pantheon, was degraded as time went on, and India sank into the dismal depths of Pantheism. It was the same in Greece. Religion in pre-Socratic Greece seems very human, in spite of alien elements which tried to blend with it. But it did not remain human. In the land of humanism the development in religious thought was away from the human through the idealistic God of Plato and the non-moral God of Aristotle to the non-human, characterless Absolute of Plotinus. On the way to the abyss Stoicism tried to arrest it. But it failed ; partly because it inverted the relation between God and man, making the wise man superior to God ; and partly because it placed the universe of Gods and men under the control of Fate. The Stoic conception of Fate, (*εἱμαρμένη*) may, as Professor Gilbert Murray thinks, have been a little more human than the earlier Necessity (*ἀνάγκη*),[1] but it is still essentially non-moral and non-human.

Greece at first shrank from the idea of the Infinite, the unbounded. Like Coleridge's ostrich, Greek genius was only an earth bird, with a sense and power of flight insufficient to lift it far from the world. That was why the ideas of God and man never blended. So the Absolute ultimately became the inane, and the human, detached from all connection with Deity, sank lower and lower.

The same thing might have happened in Israel, had it not been for the Messianic hope. In Ezekiel we still see the two elements, the human and the extra-human, blended in the conception of the Divine. But we see also how in other circumstances they might easily have fallen apart.

[1] *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 115 : "Fate becomes something less physical, more related to conscious purpose."

Yet so thoroughly was the work of the prophets done, that through the subsequent period of prophetic silence, belief in the radical congruity of the Divine and the human was kept alive by the conception of "the Son of Man," till the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst men.

The later monotheistic teaching, as well as the earlier polytheisms, has had a tendency to reject anthropomorphic religion. Islam has seemed to some, for example to Professor Abrahams, as an advance on Judaism so far as its doctrine of God is concerned.[1] But from the Christian point of view it is not an advance on the essential Old Testament idea. Allah, like Jehovah, is regarded as Almighty; but He is an Almighty Arabian Sheik, not the Almighty Son of Man. The human content, so to speak, in God is much more meagre. As in Judaism so in Islam God is much more than man, but in Islam God is much less completely man than in Judaism. One consequence of this is that there are fewer personalities in the Moslem world; and the types are neither so rich nor so varied.

The world as created by a God to whom the fullness of human nature belonged was wholly good for man. Eudæmonism of the higher sort was already involved in the Hebrew view of God's relation to the world. But it was a eudæmonism only to be fully realised in the coming days. Man's sin was responsible for the want of harmony between man and his material environment, and between man and his neighbours. The blessed life was only possible for those who placed God first. But the meek would inherit the land.[2] Those who made God their portion would not lack any good thing. The word of Wisdom, who had rejoiced to be present at the work of creation, to the sons of men is: "Riches and honour are with me: yea

[1] *Judaism*, p. 102: "The Jew would admit that Islam has absorbed and purified Jewish monotheism, . . . the Jews would perhaps admit that Christianity has absorbed, developed, enlarged and purified the Hebrew ethics." Judaism seems likely to survive, he thinks, "because it represents at once the God idea and the ethical idea."

[2] Ps. xxxvii. 11.

durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea than fine gold, and my revenue than choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness in the midst of the paths of judgment. That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, and that I may fill their treasuries." [1]

No ethic but one that is eudæmonistic can win the suffrages of the race. There is an instinct in man which tells him that the moral life is also the happy or the blessed life, that obedience to the laws of his nature or to the will of God should lead to well-being. The Hebrew regarded the path of the just as " the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." [2] In its love of life and in its confidence that the best was yet to be the Hebrew spirit was akin to the Christian. Other nations might look back to a Golden Age in the past. The Hebrew looked to the future.

But the cosmic value of the Old Testament conception of God was not the only one or the chief one. The Creator and Upholder of the Universe included within the fullness of His Infinite nature all essential human qualities. Yet it was not as Creator and Upholder of the world that He revealed Himself most fully in human-wise. It was as the Guide and Shepherd of Israel. It was on the stage of history that God was best revealed.

God was in the midst of His people, leading them to a city of habitation, which He had prepared for them; encouraging, controlling, directing them. " I taught Ephraim to go; I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I healed them." [3] " In all their affliction He was afflicted and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them, and He bare them and carried them all the days of old." [4] It was this human view of God, God as fulfilling human functions and ministering in human ways to His people, that gave the highest ethical significance to the religion of Israel. The High and Holy One inhabiting eternity dwelt also with the

[1] Prov. viii. 18–21.
[2] Prov. iv. 18.
[3] Hosea xi. 3.
[4] Is. lxiii. 9.

humble and the contrite.[1] It was the Divine gentleness that made men great.[2]

In this idea of God manifesting Himself in the redemption, direction and discipline of men the ethics of the Old Testament prepared the way for the ethics of the Gospel. The Will of God was the law of life for His people. Hebrew, like Christian, ethics are definitely based on the Divine will, or rather upon the Divine grace, which is God's will in contact with human need. It is hardly necessary to illustrate this essentially Hebrew conception of the Divine Grace as the ground of the moral life. It meets us so frequently. And because of its resemblance to the Gospel its importance is very great. More completely than in any pre-Christian system of ethics the moral life was based upon the will of God, not simply as regulative, but as redeeming. Religions of redemption are to be found elsewhere. All religions, as Tiele has said, are in some sense religions of redemption; though the ideas and methods and effects of that redemption vary enormously. At one time it is from the hostile forces of the natural world that man seeks to be delivered, from pain and sickness and death, from famine or earthquake or pestilence. At another it is from matter itself. At another from finiteness. At another from public or private foes. At another from the lower elements in one's moral constitution. At one time deliverance is sought from the past; at another from the present; at another from the future. The conception of the evil varies indefinitely; but redemption is the universal cry of the human heart.

The Biblical view embraces more than one of the foregoing. Men cried to God for deliverance from their enemies, whether private or national, from plague, and pestilence, and death, and Sheol. But the deepest longing of all, and one which may sometimes be detected at the base of the others, is the longing for the favour of God, and the desire to come into fellowship with Him. That which destroys the sense of the Divine favour is the greatest evil.

[1] Isa. lvii. 15. [2] Ps. xviii. 35.

Reconciliation and obedience are seen to be the way of blessedness. God himself is the Chief Good: His will is Duty: His likeness the all-satisfying interpretation of human virtue.

God reveals Himself, His will, His character, where men can best understand it, in human history. What God is in Himself is a question which seems hardly to occur to the Hebrew seers. It is God in His relation to man, God as He appears in the lives of individuals and of societies, that chiefly concerns them. Religion is not speculation but experience, not contemplation but fellowship. Revelation is not the lifting by man of the veil of Isis, a beholding of the form and features of Deity; nor is it reading as in a book the truths concerning God and His Kingdom. It is God doing something; God acting on the minds and hearts and wills of men. Illumination is only one aspect of the activity of the word of God. It creates and destroys. It tries men. It cleanses and renews. It has all the properties of life. It is the medium of the manifold activity as well as the revelation of the manifold wisdom of God. When God comes through His Grace into contact with men, we have the beginnings of the moral life, as Christians understand it.

We do not need to confine, and no Christian will wish to confine, the action of God's providence within the limits of one nation or church. The Old Testament itself refutes such narrow theories. God "brought up the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir."[1] There were what Bushnell called "outside saints" in the Old Testament. God did not speak only to the circumcised. Jesus spoke of the sheep which He had outside "this fold." But we rightly look to the line of Hebrew revelation for the authentic knowledge of God's will. Greece has taught us much about man, but little about God. The Spirit of God revealed to the Hebrew people as to no other nation the intimate connection between religion and life, between theology and ethics. They would not have understood the

[1] Amos ix. 7.

modern abstract treatment of morals in isolation from theology, or the modern attempt to found a religion on the moral nature of man. They thought things together in a way which has become strange to many in these days. They did not divide the universe of truth and fact into water-tight compartments. They may have had a much smaller and poorer conception of the material universe; but they did not mistake the part for the whole of reality. Their world was infinitely larger than that of many to-day.

This concreteness, this power of thinking or seeing things together is a leading characteristic of Hebrew thought and prepared men for the teachings of One who united in Himself all worlds of truth and life, who "saw life steadily and saw it whole."

The union of religion and morality, or the moralising of the relation between God and man, makes the idea of the "covenant" of supreme importance. Morality is founded on choice, upon will rather than upon nature. Abraham becomes the father of the faithful, because God chooses him and he chooses God. Jehovah redeems Israel from the house of bondage and makes a covenant with them at Sinai. There is something here very much more than the obligation implied in physical sonship or any natural bond. It is the grace of God in the call of Abraham or in the redemption from Egypt that is the foundation of the moral relationship. This elicits the faith without which it is impossible to please God and leads to the life of righteousness.

The corporate or social character of the covenant which God made with Abram or with Israel is very evident, and has been fully recognised in recent years, when the claims of social ethics have been brought so much to the front. The imperfect ideas of individuality common among more primitive peoples, to which writers like Sir Henry Maine and others drew attention, may be found in Israel, and we can see how God was teaching His people the sacred rights of the individual man or woman as well as of the tribe. But as applied to Israel the idea of the primary character of the clan has been over-emphasised. What we find more

distinctly formulated in Jeremiah and Ezekiel regarding the separate responsibilities of the individual[1] and God's ownership of each is foreshadowed not only, as Max Wiener pointed out, in Isaiah, but in Amos and in the earlier narratives of the Patriarchs. Sarah may have "called Abraham lord,"[2] but she also said "the Lord judge between thee and me."[3] The old ideas of the family were seriously affected by God's repeated preference for the younger; and the attempted sacrifice of Isaac showed Abraham that while God had absolute power of life and death over his son, he had not.

In view of the many passages in the Old Testament which ascribe human attributes to God, some may be inclined to say, that He is "all too human." Is He not called a jealous God and is not His anger frequently mentioned? It is so; and these qualities must be interpreted in the light of the fundamental conception of the Divine holiness. God "is not man that He should repent,"[4] still less that He should sin. But without jealousy and anger God would be less than man, not greater. Jealousy, even in sinful men, is not always ignoble. The jealous guarding of sacred and inalienable rights is not condemned by the highest ethic. The reason why jealousy is so often sinful is because it is unjust and selfish and unrestrained. But jealousy is the natural accompaniment of the love of God, and without it love itself would not be perfect. It stands for the watchful, protective aspect of the Divine love. It reminds us also of the truth, too little regarded in these days, that God has rights, which it would be weakness to surrender. How could He love the race with a love which would exalt and save, were it not that He loved honour and holiness also? These things are parts of Himself, and He cannot deny Himself. The self-love of God, of which the Puritan John Robinson[5] and the Roman

[1] Jer. xxxi. 30.
[2] 1 Peter iii. 6.
[3] Gen. xvi. 5.
[4] 1 Sam. xv. 29.
[5] *Essays or Observations Divine and Moral*, ch. 2.

Catholic Malebranche[1] spoke so wisely, sounds strange in modern ears. But we must get back that note into modern theology, if it is to be redeemed from effeminacy and ineffectiveness. Still less is anger necessarily ignoble. There is an anger without which no man is perfect. "Be ye angry and sin not." This anger is seen in its purity and fullness in God. It was a prophet, who saw more clearly than many of us into the depths of the Divine love, who heard God saying, "My fury, it upheld Me."[2] Some Christians are afraid of ascribing pure human emotions to God, and they think that they do Him service. But the God of the Old Testament is a very human God; and we shall never understand the ethics of the Gospel, if we shut our eyes to the fullness of His attributes as there revealed. The God of the Stoic may be without human emotions, but the God of the Old Testament is not. Neither is the God of the New Testament. It is an amazing thing that men can read the Gospels and forget that; for Jesus, in revealing more vividly the love of God, revealed also more vividly His anger. Jesus did not come to correct the Old Testament view of God. He came to fulfil it. He showed that God was not less human, but more human than men had thought. He did not apologise for His Father's emotions: He revealed them. The ethic of the Gospel, if it is in line with the Old Testament, will allow for the freest, fullest development of everything essentially human, for it will find the sanction for all these things in God Himself.

These are some of the general ways in which the Old Testament prepared for the New. It humanised men's conceptions of God. It definitely connected morality with religion as the service of God, and with history as the revelation of the redeeming activity of God. It took a concrete view of the universe as opposed to an abstract and departmental one. It regarded the world as created good, and found the guarantee for the universal instinct for happiness in the character and doings of God. It stood

[1] *Dialogues*, 8. [2] Isa. lxiii. 5.

for the value not only of the social life, but of the individual. It showed that sin, though a universal fact, was no necessary part of human nature, and pointed on to a new covenant, which God would make with men, when the law would be written not on tables of stone, but upon the heart. It made grace the objective principle and faith the subjective principle of morality, and laid the foundation for the permanent enrichment of the moral ideal in its emphasis on faith and hope and love.

CHAPTER III

THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE Gospel was first preached by Jesus as the Gospel of the Kingdom; and when He sent forth His disciples to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, it was to announce that the Kingdom was at hand, and that the sovereignty of the Father was in some special way to be manifested. In none of the eight or nine passages which describe these events is the content of the Gospel further defined.[1] But its moral significance is implied in the command to "repent," which was associated with the announcement; and in the beneficent works which were to accompany it. At Nazareth, too, Jesus showed who they were to whom the good news was given.[2] Very soon the ethical character of the Kingdom was made more explicit by the addition of the word "righteousness," and by the fuller expositions which followed.[3] So well established was the ethical character of the Kingdom that it would be possible, if we desired, using only the earlier Synoptic teaching, to make a provisional construction of Christian Ethics in which the Kingdom of God would appear as the Greatest Good, the supreme obligation, and the highest Virtue.

The idea of a Kingdom of God among men was not a new one. In some form it was familiar to the contemporaries of Jesus. Some may have thought of it simply as the universal sovereignty of God; others as a Jewish theocracy, and again others as an apocalyptic vision.

[1] Matt. iv. 17–23; ix. 35; x. 7; Mark i. 15; iii. 14; Luke iv. 43; viii. 1; ix. 2.

[2] Luke iv. 18.

[3] Matt. vi. 33, etc.

Some, we know, were waiting for it.[1] Others thought it would immediately appear.[2] There were those who already claimed to be its children.[3] The Pharisees believed that they had the power to admit to its membership, or to exclude men from it. Probably nearly every one in Israel attached some meaning to the phrase. But very few, if any, knew what Jesus meant by it. It was a mystery to which men could be introduced only by initiation. Jesus Himself spoke of it as a Mystery. He said to His disciples, according to the words in Mark's Gospel, "Unto you is given the mystery of the Kingdom of God," or according to Matthew and Luke, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God (or of heaven)."[4] The singular is very naturally used by Mark, who records comparatively little of the teaching of Jesus, and looks at the Kingdom in its concrete unity and fullness of power; while Matthew and Luke, who record much more of the teaching, speak of the many aspects of the one great mystery. The further variation, "knowledge of the mysteries" instead of the mystery itself, can hardly be regarded as an intentional toning down of the Marcan Logion, for both Matthew and Luke speak elsewhere of the Kingdom itself as a gift. Both forms of the saying may very well go back to Jesus Himself. We do little honour to the wisdom of the greatest of all teachers, if we suppose that He never repeated, and never varied the form of His lessons.

The conception of the religion of Jesus as a Mystery religion does not, however, rest upon one well-attested Logion or upon two. The idea runs through the whole of the teaching of Jesus Christ, and we shall never understand either the earlier or later presentations of the Gospel in the Apostolic age, if we neglect this view of the Kingdom of God. It is here rather than in the barely theistic, or utilitarian, or apocalyptic interpretations, that we shall find what is most original in the teaching and work of Jesus.

[1] Luke ii. 25–38; Mark xv. 43.
[2] Luke xix. 11.
[3] Matt. xxi. 43; Luke xii. 32; xiii. 28.
[4] Mark iv. 11; Matt. xiii. 11; Luke viii. 10.

It was this aspect of the Kingdom that was almost foreign to contemporary Judaism, and which baffled the disciples, until they were baptized with the Holy Ghost and with power. Those who had most fully entered into the mind of Jesus, and who had witnessed the outward signs that the Kingdom was at hand, did not at once inherit the promise He gave them. On the contrary, as later when the Risen Christ drew near to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, "their eyes were holden that they should not know Him."[1]

In our time the "Kingdom of God" has been a very favourite phrase in which to sum up the original and permanent message of the Gospel. It has been used by Christians of varied types of thinking, by social reformers who had little knowledge of the New Testament teaching, and by others. It has been drawn into the arena of law and politics, the sphere from which Jesus was apparently most anxious to keep it. The legalists and politicians could not understand Him, and it was a Zealot who betrayed Him.[2] The popularity of the phrase in these days is largely due to the fact that it has been shorn of its mystery. It is not the Kingdom which Jesus preached, and for which the Apostles lived and died. That Kingdom can no more be identified with modern democracies than with Davidic, or Hildebrandine, or Cromwellian theocracies. It is something infinitely more than any or than all of these; and when its true character is declared many, like the multitudes in the Gospel narratives, content with the loaves and the ministries of healing and the beautiful parables, are offended and "go away."[3] Yet the Mystery abides: the Kingdom is not shaken. Other mystery religions have gone, but this remains.

The contrasts between the religion of Jesus, the perfect

[1] Luke xxiv. 16.

[2] "The whole teaching of Jesus is grounded in what may be termed an ethical mysticism. . . . His precepts lose all their meaning when they are construed on the ground of any prudential or social philosophy," says Professor E. F. Scott in his recent book, *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, p. 41.

[3] John vi. 67.

type of Mystery religion, and the others are very marked. The heathen cults, for example, were not purely monotheistic. They were mythological, rather than based upon historic facts. They moved also in a naturalistic, rather than an ethical, sphere. They appealed to the emotions rather than to the conscience, and surrounded their initiates with the artificial atmosphere of the drama, not with the realities of the spiritual world. They exaggerated the value of ritual in religion, whereas Jesus taught a religion singularly free from forms and ceremonies—a worship of the Father in spirit and in truth.[1] And yet, in spite of these and other differences, there were general features in common, of which three may be specially mentioned. The Mystery religions were esoteric in character. They were spiritual brotherhoods, and they were very specially religions of redemption.[2]

We are so accustomed to the idea of the universality of Christianity that we are apt to forget that the religion of Jesus Christ was in the first instance, and in a sense remained, the most esoteric of all religions. The Mystery cults were open only to initiates. So, too, was it with the religion of Jesus. It may for a time have been even more exclusive than the Greek and Eastern cults, for, according to the Synoptists, it is not clear that racial distinctions were at first transcended. Jesus said, "I was not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[3] And He charged the twelve, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[4] The Universalism of the Gospel, however, in due time became apparent, and it was, I think, in the mind of the Founder from the beginning. So it is not fair to press this limitation. In essence the religion of Jesus was as independent of nationality as any

[1] John iv. 23.

[2] Among the vast number of books dealing with the Mysteries, two recent incidental notices should not be overlooked in Machen's *The Origin of Paul's Religion*, and Bevan's *Hellenism and Christianity*.

[3] Matt. xv. 24. [4] Matt. x. 5.

of the cults. It was "Good tidings of great joy to all the people,"[1] but it was also "a light for revelation to the Gentiles."[2] Nevertheless it was more exclusive than any other. The conditions of membership were more stringent. No mere outward rite could introduce men into the heavenly Kingdom. Wealth was a hindrance rather than a help to those seeking admission.[3] Mere worldly wisdom of any kind was useless, for "these things were hidden from the wise and understanding."[4] Only a chosen few were admitted into the inner courts of the heavenly Temple.[5] The multitudes were so incapable of understanding what the Kingdom was, that Jesus spoke to them in parables. He was the sole Mystagogue of the heavenly mysteries. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."[6] The qualifications for discipleship were not natural or psychical or constitutional. In that sense initiation was open to all alike, or rather denied to all alike. None became members of the Kingdom, because they had a genius for religion; and none were excluded, because they had not. Even morality of a conventional sort was useless, for Jesus Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners.[7] Discipleship meant renunciation of all that a man had.[8] It meant reversal of all that was most axiomatic in his ways of thinking and most habitual in his mode of living. It meant being born again, and becoming as a little child.[9] The Kingdom was for the poor in spirit, and only to the pure in heart could the mystic vision be given.[10] The initiation could not have been made more difficult. It was impossible to man.

But once initiated, could not men reveal the secrets of the Kingdom? Not at first, according to the Gospels of

[1] Luke ii. 10. [2] Luke ii. 32. [3] Mark x. 23.
[4] Matt. xi. 25; Luke x. 21. [5] Matt. xxii. 14.
[6] Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22; John xiv. 6.
[7] Mark ii. 17; Matt. ix. 13; Luke v. 32 ("to repentance").
[8] Luke xiv. 33, etc. [9] John iii. 3; Mark x. 15.
[10] Matt. v. 3–8.

Matthew and Mark. Such a central fact as that Jesus was the Messiah was not to be divulged.[1] Neither in the sending forth of the twelve nor of the seventy have we any information as to the nature of the Gospel entrusted to them. The Gospel was first seen in action, in deeds rather than in words. The "new teaching" Mark tells us was the command to unclean spirits to come out of men, and bodily sicknesses to depart.[2] There is no hint of a doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood or of the Cross, in the Gospel as first proclaimed by the disciples. And the silence at the time of their ordination is confirmed by the subsequent narratives. There is no instance recorded in the Gospels of the disciples using the word "Father," either in speaking to the people, or among themselves, or to the Master, until at the end of the public ministry the bewildered Philip exclaims, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us."[3] And as for the Cross, we are told that the disciples durst not speak about it even to Jesus.[4] If then the disciples understood the mysteries, they do not seem to have divulged them. They were heralds, not exponents of the Kingdom. Their work was to proclaim the advent of the Kingdom, and point to the signs of its presence among men.

Like the Mystery religions the Gospel of the Kingdom was a Gospel of brotherhood, based not on racial or natural ties but upon religious affinities. It was by an act of religion that men became brothers, in the sense in which Jesus used the word. It was a moral relationship into which men entered, rather than a natural relationship from which they started. The idea of the natural brotherhood of men has no prominence in the teaching of Jesus. No doubt Jesus shared and exalted the Hebrew belief, that man had been created in the image of God, and that therefore there were natural or constitutional affinities between the members of the race. But it was the Apostle Paul, in meeting the Stoics on their own ground, who directly

[1] Mark viii. 30; Matt. xvi. 20.
[2] Mark i. 27; "What is this? A new teaching!"
[3] John xiv. 8.
[4] Luke ix. 45; Matt. xvii. 23.

enunciated this doctrine,[1] and neither Jesus Christ nor Paul made it the centre of his teaching. The thoughts of the Master and of the disciple moved in a different realm. By a moral transformation men "became" the sons of God, and brethren one of another. The Gospel like the Mystery religions advanced beyond the Stoic doctrine of the natural fatherhood of God and of the natural brotherhood of men; but it also left the Mystery religions far behind, because it construed the relationship in a moral and spiritual, instead of merely sacramental fashion. In doing this it was helped, as we have already seen, by the essentially ethical character of the Hebrew faith, which based morality on the Grace of Jehovah and the free, spontaneous, and deliberate choice implied in a covenant. The people of God were those with whom God had entered into covenant relations, and who had chosen Jehovah as their God. To such, individually or as a people, God was Father; and through the New Covenant of the Cross Jesus deepened and widened, but did not demoralise, the ethical conception of the Old Testament. Christianity starts from a moral transaction, not from a constitutional necessity. According to the New Testament men are the children of God, not by physical causation, but by an act of grace freely offered and voluntarily accepted.

Before Jesus instituted the New Covenant in His blood, He had already made clear what He meant by the brotherhood of the Kingdom. "He that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother," is one of the few sayings which, in slightly different forms, occurs in three of the Gospels.[2] "Not every one that saith unto Me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven."[3] The brotherhood of the Kingdom is not wide as humanity itself, nor even wide as the society of nominally Christian believers. It rests upon moral and

[1] Acts xvii. 28.
[2] Matt. xii. 50; Mark iii. 35; Luke viii. 21.
[3] Matt. vii. 21.

spiritual grounds. Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament conception of God as Father. He did not lead men back to the tribal notion of Deity, or expand the idea as Stoicism did. He deepened and moralised it. "To as many as received Him to them gave He the right to become children of God."[1]

Thirty years ago we were told frequently and with great confidence that the essential thing in the Gospel was the idea of the universal Fatherhood of God with its correlative idea of the universal brotherhood of man. A more thorough study of the sources and of contemporary Jewish thought is now discrediting that opinion, and making possible for some a return to the Apostolic teaching. It is now asserted by advanced critics like Kirsopp-Lake and Foakes-Jackson that the idea "that the Synoptists, and especially their source, show that the main message of Jesus was the general Fatherhood of God" is "entirely erroneous"; [2] and students of Jewish literature like Dalman have shown that the application of the word "Father" to God was not peculiar to Jesus, but common to contemporary Judaism. Professor M'Giffert very frankly tells us that he has now come to see that "nothing could well be more erroneous than the opinion that Jesus went beyond His countrymen in emphasising the fatherhood of God."[3]

But Jesus did something very much more than emphasise the idea of the Fatherhood of God. He transformed it. Whether He used the word "Father" more frequently or less frequently than His contemporaries, those who accept the Gospels at their face value can see that it was His favourite way of thinking about God and the way in which He wished His disciples to think. He came forth from the bosom of the Father to declare Him; and by His character and life, but very specially by His death, He led those who entered into sympathy with His thought and purpose from the physical and constitutional to the spiritual and ethical conception of Fatherhood, that is, from the region of

[1] John i. 12. [2] *The Beginnings of Christianity*, I. p. 401.
[3] *The God of the Early Christians*, p. 13.

necessity to that of grace. If Jesus did not mean by Fatherhood something more than the philosophers or than contemporary Jewish teachers meant, would He have said, "No man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him?"[1] Men become sons of God by a new birth. Each initiate is, as the later Mysteries said, "*re-natus in æternum*," and so the followers of Christ are brothers one of another.

The Gospel of the Kingdom like the religion of the Mysteries was a Gospel of redemption. The redemption which Jesus achieved, and which became the main theme of the Gospel preachers, was already foreshadowed in His earthly life and ministry. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many."[2] He had already proclaimed release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind. He had set at liberty those that were bound and had proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord.[3] His presence among men had already brought relief from sickness and sorrow and disease and death. At His word demons had departed and men's sins had been forgiven. The weary and heavy-laden had found rest in His presence. But by His death He was to accomplish much more than was apparent in His life. The whole earthly ministry was but a prelude to the one great act of redemption to be effected by His death.

As we look back over the life of Jesus we are surprised on the one hand by the intensity of that life, and on the other by the scantiness of the evidence of success, where we should most expect it, in the salvation of men from sin. As we read the Gospel of Mark, we do not find a single instance given of the words and deeds of Jesus before the Passion week leading men directly to repentance and the confession of sin. Men left their former manner of life at the call of Jesus, and became His disciples; but the extent and nature of the change is hidden from us. A possible

[1] Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22.
[2] Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45.
[3] Luke iv. 18, 19.

exception is the case of the paralytic. But it is there said "Jesus seeing *their* faith"; and though the paralytic's sins were forgiven, attention is not drawn to the repentance and faith of the sufferer, or to his changed character. It is much the same in the longer Gospel of Matthew.[1] There is hardly anything which brings into clear light Christ's power to transform character. It is not till we come to the Gospel of Luke that we find men confessing sin in the presence of Christ. There we have three instances recorded before the Passion—Peter's "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"; the penitence of the woman in Simon's house; and the resolve of Zacchæus to make amends for his past extortions.[2] When we consider the purpose for which Jesus came into the world, this list is not a long one. At the preaching of John the Baptist multitudes were said to have repented and confessed their sins; and again at Pentecost thousands were pricked in their hearts; but how few, according to the records, believed the report of the suffering Servant of Jehovah! Instead of numerous instances of conversion, we have the woes pronounced on whole cities that repented not.[3]

Now why is this? It might be said by some, that the silence shows that the authors of the first two Gospels were not so much interested in the spiritual side of Christ's work as in the bodily cures. And support might be sought for in the fact that while Matthew finds a fulfilment of the prophecy of the Suffering Servant in Christ's bearing the infirmities and sicknesses of men, he does not go on to say that, like the Suffering Servant, Jesus bore the sin of many.[4] Nevertheless this would not be correct. Matthew expressly says that Jesus was so called because "He would save His people from their sins."[5] The silence was not due to lack of interest on the part of the Evangelists, but probably to one or both the following reasons. Firstly that the effects of the influence of Jesus in changing the characters of men

[1] Matt. ix. 2; Mark ii. 5; Luke v. 20.
[2] Luke v. 8; vii. 38, etc.; xix. 8.
[3] Matt. xi. 20; Luke x. 12.
[4] Matt. viii. 17.
[5] Matt. i. 21; cf. ix. 13, etc.

were not so evident to all as His power to heal sicknesses and cast out demons. And secondly that the Evangelists wished to show that the saving power of Jesus was exerted through His death and resurrection, rather than in His earthly life. All the Evangelical records are "Leidensgeschichten," histories of the Passion. Something like three-eighths of the Gospel of Mark is concerned with the events of the Passion week, and rather more of the Gospel of John. All the four Evangelists alike concentrate on the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Everything leads up to the sacrifice and victory of the Cross. "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ" might be from the advent of the forerunner John the Baptist, or from the birth at Bethlehem, or from "the beginning" when the Word was with God, but the culmination was the victory of the crucified Saviour. The Gospel was not regarded as complete until the offering had been made. Redemption was through His blood. It was by His death that Jesus "opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers."

Into connection with this mysterious kingdom the Ethics of the Gospel are brought by Jesus Himself, and by the Evangelists who wrote concerning Him. Only the initiated could see the Kingdom. Membership in the Kingdom implied a new relationship to God as Father, and so to the fellow-heirs of the Kingdom as brethren. The essential nature of the Kingdom was manifested in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ upon the Cross.

Without travelling beyond the four Gospels we are entitled to explain the Gospel of the Kingdom in this way, and therefore they are rightly called Gospels. They contain the Gospel, the same Gospel which the other writings of the New Testament adopt and expound. There were not two Gospels in the Apostolic Age, as Harnack thinks. There certainly was not one Gospel of the Evangelists, and another of the Epistles. "The Epistles and the Gospels alike sprang out of the Gospel."[1] They alike contain the

[1] J. Moffatt, *The Theology of the Gospels*, p. 38.

Gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus, though the Epistles possibly bring out more fully the meaning and consequences of those events. The Kingdom of which they speak "comes out of the crucible of the Passion and Resurrection. It has no meaning and could have had no existence apart from them." [1]

And the Christian way of life continued to be expounded in connection with the Gospel of the Kingdom by the Apostles after the Resurrection. The phrase is not confined to the sayings of Jesus recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, to Palestinian Christians, or to those who first heard it from the lips of Jesus. Indeed it is more frequently used by the Apostle Paul than by James or Jude or Peter or John. Most of the New Testament writers use it at least occasionally; but it is found in every group of the Pauline Epistles, and in some of his Epistles more than once. Paul never surrendered the term in favour of "Church" or any other concept. In his earliest letters to the Thessalonians, he not only uses the word, but connects it definitely with the new type of life and character proper to the disciples of Christ. He reminds his readers how he had exhorted them to "walk worthily of God who calleth you into His own kingdom and glory," and rejoices that they are counted "worthy of the Kingdom of God for which they also suffer." [2] And at the very end of his career the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles leaves him "preaching the Kingdom of God" to all that went to see him, "and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness." [3]

The teaching of Paul regarding the Kingdom is a continuation of the teaching of Jesus, and has notable points of resemblance. Jesus had said "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." [4] The Apostle says, "flesh and blood cannot inherit it." [5] Jesus said, "If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the

[1] P. E. T. Widdrington, *The Return of Christendom*, p. 105.
[2] 1 Thess. ii. 12; 2 Thess. i. 5.
[3] Acts xxviii. 31.
[4] John iii. 3.
[5] 1 Cor. xv. 50.

Kingdom of God is come upon you."[1] The Apostle said, "For the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."[2] Jesus speaks of "the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."[3] The Apostle says, "the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."[4] Jesus spoke of the Kingdom as the Kingdom of the Father, and looked forward to the time when He would drink the new wine "in my Father's Kingdom"[5]: the apostle to the "delivering up of the Kingdom to God, even the Father."[6] The apocalyptic aspect of the Kingdom was connected by Jesus with the coming of the Son of Man:[7] the Apostle solemnly charges Timothy "by his appearing and his Kingdom."[8] In the Beatitudes and elsewhere Jesus dwells upon the inward character of His Kingdom: the Apostle defines it as "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."[9] Even the connection of the Kingdom with the Holy Spirit can hardly be regarded as a Pauline innovation, for the earliest proclamation of the Kingdom by John the Baptist contained the promise, recorded by all the Evangelists, that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost; and the last discourse of Jesus to His disciples before "opening the Kingdom to all believers" was largely concerned with the work of the Holy Spirit."[10]

There are many references to the mysteries of the Kingdom in the Pauline and other writings of the New Testament. One especially may be mentioned here: the great declaration of the Pastoral Epistles of the "Mystery of Godliness," where the Gospel is described, not as a dramatic representation enacted like the Mithraic rites in

[1] Luke xi. 20. [2] 1 Cor. iv. 20. [3] Matt. vi. 33.
[4] 1 Cor. vi. 9; Gal. v. 21; Eph. v. 5.
[5] Matt. xxvi. 29; Mark has "God," xiv. 25, but Mark seldom speaks of God as Father. The references in Matthew are numerous.
[6] 1 Cor. xv. 24. [7] Matt. xxv. 31, etc.
[8] 2 Tim. iv. 1. [9] Rom. xiv. 17.
[10] Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; John i. 33; xiv–xvi. Though Luke refers much more frequently to the Holy Spirit than Matthew, it is the latter who gives the saying of Jesus, "if I, by the Spirit of God. . . ." Matt. xii. 28.

the caves of the earth, but as a series of historic events taking place in the sight of men and angels: "He who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory."[1]

Paul was true throughout to his Master's description of the Kingdom as a mystery. The Apostles are "stewards of the mysteries of God."[2] "We speak God's wisdom in a mystery"[3] and the esoteric character of the Kingdom is abundantly recognised in such sayings as "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged;"[4] "No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit."[5] "The riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles" is "Christ in you, the hope of Glory,"[6] and to such the Apostle spoke without reservations, "admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ."[7]

And Paul was entirely in line with the earlier teaching of Jesus as given in the Gospels, when he spoke of the kinship implied in the Kingdom.[8] We become Sons of God by an act of Grace on the part of God and of moral choice or faith on our side. "Ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."[9] We receive the adoption of sons, and God sends the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, which enables us to realise this mystic union.[10] Christians are baptized into the mystic fellowship of the Body of Christ "in one Spirit."[11] There is nothing magical here. There is nothing sacramentarian. But there is mystery, the greatest of all mysteries, the dawn

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 16. [2] 1 Cor. iv. 1. [3] 1 Cor. ii. 7.
[4] 1 Cor. ii. 14. [5] 1 Cor. xii. 3. [6] Col. i. 27.
[7] Col. i. 28.
[8] It is an interesting coincidence that kinship and kingdom are in English etymologically connected.
[9] Gal. iii. 26. [10] Gal. iv. 6. [11] 1 Cor. xii. 13.

of a new life, the beginning of a new moral career, the entrance into a new world, the revelation of an eternal kingdom.

So too, like Jesus, Paul and the other Apostles connect the idea of the Mystery of the Kingdom with a redemption achieved on the Cross. In the earlier days Jesus kept this truth from the multitudes, and only spoke of it to the disciples as they were able to receive it. They did not fully understand. But He had committed the secret to them. They did not speak of it openly. They did not probably talk much about it among themselves. But they had heard the news. They had received the key, which was afterwards to unlock the Mystery of the Kingdom. Not until Jesus had suffered and risen from the dead, did they use the key, and begin to rejoice in the secret disclosed to them. It was at Pentecost that Peter and the other Apostles began to receive the fulfilment of the Saviour's promise " I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." [1]

Those who wish to find the sources of morality in the natural order will turn away from this conception of a supernatural kingdom, in which heaven and earth, God and man, are linked together, as foolish and mythological. It forms no part, and provides no just description, of the universe as known to them. It is for such persons outside experience, and incapable of proof. Is not morality endangered by associating it with conceptions which may be no more than fancies? Were it not better to ground morality on human nature, as the average psychologist or humanist regards it; or even seek a foundation for it in the world as known to physical science? The object of this book is to suggest that it would not be better; especially in view of the history of natural morals and the modern situation. But one or two things may be said in passing.

In the first place this supernatural view of morals, as expressed in the phrase " Kingdom of God," is in the field

[1] Matt. xvi. 19; cp. Matt. xviii. 18.

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to-day, and has received the assent of many of the best men and women, cultured and uncultured, since Jesus Christ came. It has found adherents among all nations, the more highly civilised as well as the less civilised. In the light of its history and present position it cannot be lightly dismissed. The supernatural character of morality was affirmed by Jesus Himself, that is by One who, in spite of the amoralists, is still regarded by many of the most competent persons outside the churches as the greatest of moral teachers, and, at the lowest, a man of singular sincerity and lofty character. There are many who would still say with Renan, that Jesus will never be surpassed, or with J. S. Mill, that Jesus is the best practical guide for those who wish to see the principles of morality embodied in concrete form. The affirmations of such an one as Jesus of Nazareth, if they were no more than opinions, and He no more than Renan or Mill thought Him to be, would be worthy of the highest regard.

And secondly, there is the further question as to the right of anyone to separate morality from the total life of mankind, and reason about it as though it were a whole, complete in itself. As a matter of fact, religion and morality have constantly been associated. The nature and value of the connection have been variously estimated; but that they have been connected in fact, few would care to deny. Is it not quite possible that men who start from a view of morality as separable from religion, and adopt a departmental scheme of the world of reality may be preventing themselves from arriving at a knowledge of the truth? The danger of isolating realms of knowledge is as real as the danger of parcelling out the mind into separate faculties; and both mistakes are involved in isolating morals from religion, and assigning the last word of authority to the non-religious moralist. A wrong is committed both against the integrity of human nature and against the unity of truth. By the setting up of arbitrary boundaries many things may appear to be true which are seen to be false when we take in a larger universe of observation. Can the

moral subject be so isolated from the religious that we can faithfully describe his characteristics in abstraction? If there be a God, may He not have something to say regarding the relation of man to man as well as of man to Himself? The children in the nursery may draw up rules and regulations for their little societies, which seem to them very admirable. But is the last word with them?

CHAPTER IV

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST

AS the Gospel is called not only the "Gospel of the Kingdom" but also the "Gospel of Jesus Christ," so the Ethics of the Gospel must be regarded in their relation to Jesus Christ, as well as to the Kingdom of God. He is the Mystagogue of the heavenly kingdom, introducing men into its mysteries; but He is much more than that. He is Himself the creator, sustainer and perfecter of the new life. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."[1] As He moved about amongst men the Kingdom of God was felt to be at hand, and men began to press into it.[2] With the finger of God He cast out devils and the Kingdom of God came upon them. One who had kept the commandments, and was not far from the Kingdom, was required to give proof of absolute obedience to Jesus Christ before he could become an initiate.[3] Jesus habitually demanded obedience so complete, that nothing but the possession of sovereignty in the Kingdom of God could justify it. As men were to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, the pearl of great price for which they must be willing to part with everything, so they were to leave all and follow Him, if they would be His disciples. "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."[4] Devotion to Christ is the way in which loyalty to the Kingdom is shown.

[1] John i. 4.
[2] Luke xvi. 16; xi. 20.
[3] Mark xii. 34.
[4] Luke xiv. 26.

His authority becomes the moral imperative, because it is the law of the Kingdom made more personal and concrete. It is as Son of Man that all authority is given to Jesus.[1] The Divine Authority is expressed in human-wise, and loses all appearance of externality. The will of God in Christ does not override or crush human personality; for it is no alien power, but comes to us through the perfect humanity of Jesus. When a man obeys Jesus, he is true to his own nature. When he disobeys, he does violence to all that is most properly his own.

The question of authority is settled once for all for the Christian. It is the will of God as expressed in Jesus Christ. In the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere Jesus claimed that authority. He claimed to be greater than prophets and wise men, greater than kings and priests, greater than all institutions human and Divine.[2] He spoke as one who knew that His word was absolute truth and absolute law. He knew that men's characters and destinies were determined by their attitude towards Himself.[3] All this is made quite clear in the Synoptic Gospels; but is developed most completely in the Gospel of John, as we should naturally expect. The teaching of Jesus as given in the fourth Gospel is not chiefly for the multitudes, but for the disciples, and for the religious authorities in Judea. To His own disciples it was fitting that He should reveal the intimacy of the relation they sustained to Him and the completeness of His authority. "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." "Without Me ye can do nothing."[4] And to the Jews, particularly the scribes and rulers at Jerusalem, it was also reasonable that He should show the superiority of His claim to speak on behalf of God. The saying, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things,"[5] which we

[1] John v. 27.
[2] Matt. xii. 6, 8, 41, 42.
[3] Luke xx. 18; Matt. xi. 24, etc.
[4] John xv. 14, 5.
[5] Matt. xxi. 27; Mark xi. 33; Luke xx. 8.

find in the Synoptic Gospels, represents only one aspect of the attitude of Jesus towards the religious leaders of the people. If they would not honestly face the question of the authority of the Baptist, they could not possibly deal fairly with the authority of Him to whom the Baptist testified. Yet Jesus did not leave them without witness. By His silence He rebuked dishonesty, but by His explicit declarations He removed all grounds of uncertainty. There were times to be silent, and there were times to speak, as all the Gospels show. If Jesus refused to tell the chief priests and elders by what authority He resisted those who made the House of God a den of robbers, He did not refuse to give a direct answer to the High-priest, when he asked Him, "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" This reply and also the decision of "the high-priest" or "priests and scribes" that the confession was "blasphemy" or punishable by death, is given by all the Synoptists.[1] There is no ground for doubting the authenticity of the more detailed and frequent controversies given in the Gospel of John. It would have been remarkable if the Gospel which gives so much fuller an account of the ministry of Jerusalem, had not recorded more fully than the other Gospels the conflicts of Jesus with the authorities. It would have been remarkable also if Jesus had not revealed more explicitly to them the grounds on which His authority rested.

So explicit were the testimonies of Jesus to Himself, that the question of His authority resolves itself into one as to His trustworthiness. That Jesus Christ should have been either a deceiver or deceived appears to the Christian so impossible, that to say so would not only be to deny His Lord, but to deny himself.

Jesus Christ is Lord over all. He has power over mind and matter, over men and demons, over disease and death and sin, over winds and sea and all the forces of nature. There is a disposition in many quarters to-day to accept

[1] Matt. xxvi. 64; Mark xiv. 62; Luke xxii. 70.

the moral supremacy of Jesus and profess indifference or hesitancy regarding His power over what men call "Nature." The miracles are a stumbling-block. Jesus Christ, it is said, could not have walked on the sea, or stilled the storm, or done anything which required more than the exercise of such moral force as is known to us. It may be so, if the limits of what is possible are to be determined by modern kenotic theories. But these may not contain the last words of human wisdom. As scientific hypotheses they are discredited, for they do not explain all the facts. They are untrue to the sources of our knowledge of the earthly life of Jesus. It is the pressure of the problems of criticism that has given to them a fictitious importance. If Professor Loofs' information is correct,[1] they were already discredited in the eyes of German theologians before gaining wide acceptance in Great Britain. Their days are probably numbered. Attempts to determine the limits of the power and of the knowledge of Jesus are doomed to failure. It is a task beyond our powers.

The arbitrary separation between the moral and the natural realms, which is involved in the denial of the miraculous, would probably have been unintelligible to the writers of the New Testament. They believed that the Divine power was manifested alike in what we call the moral and the material worlds, and that that power resided in Jesus. He would not have been Lord to them, if He had not been Lord of nature as well as of men. And we, too, should have lost a convincing proof that creation and redemption were the work of one and the same God, for the nature-miracles are effectual reminders that there is no schism in the Godhead. The Father revealed in Jesus is not only the "Holy" and the "Righteous," but the "Lord of heaven and earth."[2] Jesus revealed in Himself the creative power as well as the goodness of the Father. In Him we see the absolute harmony of power and worth, the union of omnipotence and holy love; and our hearts

[1] *What is the Truth about Jesus Christ?* p. 223. [2] Matt. xi. 25.

are satisfied. Gnostic fancies cease to allure or distress us, and we have no use for the conception of a finite God.

There is no description of Jesus in the New Testament which allows us to think of Him as a finite God, or the revelation of a finite God. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."[1] To the idea of faith the bodily form is not a limitation, but a supreme vindication of His omnipotence. To do what Jesus did in a human body and in a hostile world is to triumph over all limitations. That is not a sign of weakness, but of power. In the paradoxical language of Paul "the weakness of God is stronger than men."[2] It is well to emphasise this aspect of the supernatural nature of Jesus Christ, for it is not very popular in these days. We have had our attention so persistently directed to the supposed limitations of Godhead, that we are in danger of neglecting the Divine prerogative of power. Like poor "Saul" we have been sighing so long for "the weakness in strength," that we forget the strength. We need to get back to the Bible conception of an Almighty God. "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God."[3] "Above all" said an early Christian liturgy "we thank Thee that Thou art mighty."[4]

That was the conception which men had of Jesus in the Apostolic Age. The Gospel of Mark is as decisive in this respect as the Gospel of John. The impression which Jesus made upon men was that of supernatural strength. This is the aspect of the character or personality of Jesus which predominates even in Mark. The compassion of Jesus is once referred to in that Gospel, and is of course implied elsewhere. The tenderness of Jesus is seen in His treatment of little children and elsewhere. But Mark seems specially to delight in recording the works of power. Those may have been works of mercy as well. But it is

[1] Col. ii. 9.
[2] 1 Cor. i. 25.
[3] Ps. lxii. 11.
[4] *Didache*, ch. x.

the power, rather than the mercy, that is commented on: the emotion elicited is astonishment rather than gratitude or an answering sympathy. Once we are told that the people heard Jesus "gladly." It was when He had silenced the Scribes.[1] But sixteen times in the sixteen chapters we are told that the multitudes or the disciples were "afraid," "astonished," "amazed," "sore afraid," "sore amazed," "astonished beyond measure," "greatly amazed." It was sometimes the words of Jesus that provoked the amazement and fear; sometimes it was His works. But there can be no doubt that these emotions are the predominant ones. Whatever else Jesus seemed, He was the strong Lord. Men were overawed by the authority of Jesus. Even the strong vehement man of the deserts confessed that Jesus was "mightier than I." Modern pictures of the gentle Jesus must not be substituted for the completer presentation given in the Gospels. In the Middle Ages the severity of Jesus was separated from His gentleness and reserved for the Day of Judgment, while the earthly life was all meekness and gentleness. Austin Phelps once asked, "Is there in the galleries of Italy a solitary picture in which He appears gesturing with the fist?"[2] The vehemence of Jesus is often forgotten. It is the perfect combination of gentleness and severity, each raised to its highest power, that we find in the Gospel portraiture.

The moral supremacy of Jesus is not to be divorced from the supernatural powers that resided in Him. The two were indissolubly united in the perfect personality of Jesus. Just as no physical marvels could in themselves be regarded as conclusive proof that Jesus came forth from God, so the moral alone would in itself afford no perfect guarantee that all things would at length be subjected to God. The Incarnation has shown us that perfect goodness and perfect power are ultimately one.

It was not the mere exhibition of physical power, that amazed the multitudes. Personality is ever more than

[1] Mark xii. 37. [2] *English Style in Public Discourse*, p. 226.

nature. What we sometimes think of as "Nature" was moralised in Jesus Christ. The highest life is the complete life, the life in which the physical is perfectly obedient to the moral. The "righteousness" of Matthew, the "grace" of Luke, and the "truth" of John must be added to the personal energy or "power" of Mark, if we would rightly explain the authority of Jesus, or describe the cardinal virtues of the Christian character.

Christians regard Jesus as the supreme authority in morals, not only as Teacher, but as Example. Jesus wished His disciples to regard Him in this way. The gracious invitation given in Matthew, "Come unto Me all ye that labour . . . learn of Me,"[1] and the explicit command in John to imitate the example given in the feet-washing,[2] as well as the frequent call to follow Him, given in all the Gospels, show that Jesus regarded Himself as an example. But, if we would understand what Jesus meant we should remember (*a*) that in the Gospels, as indeed also in the Epistles, the imitation of Christ's example, or the following of Him, is always associated with the exhibition of a meek and lowly spirit, the bearing of a cross, or ministering to others. John adds the new commandment, which makes the limitless love of the Master the guiding principle, "that ye love one another as I have loved you."[3] In the Epistles the idea of assimilation is more common than that of imitation, though we find such phrases as "walking as He walked," and "follow His steps."[4] The Christian is to be "like Christ," "conformed to His image," "transformed into the same image from glory to glory." He is to attain to "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."[5] (*b*) That a literal imitation would not necessarily fulfil the wish of Jesus. It might be right for Jesus to do many things which we ought not to do. His work was not altogether our work, and duty is determined by

[1] Matt. xi. 28.
[2] John xiii. 14.
[3] John xv. 12.
[4] 1 John ii. 6; 1 Peter ii. 21.
[5] 1 John iii. 2; Rom. viii. 29; 2 Cor. iii. 18; Eph. iv. 13.

vocation. No man is called like Jesus to give His life a ransom for many; and that sovereign purpose determined many of the things He did or left undone. Because Jesus, in the interests of His vocation, or owing to the fact that His personality was not altogether like our own, remained unmarried, celibacy is not obligatory for His disciples. Certain Christians in the second century pleaded that they must be circumcised, because Jesus was circumcised. Ignatius thought that the prospect of literal martyrdom determined the beginning of his Christian discipleship. "Now," said he, in anticipation of the lions, "I begin to be a disciple." Certain Africans came to Augustine, professing that they had adopted the kind of life that Jesus lived; but that did not make them Christians in his eyes. The literal imitation of Jesus may or may not be right. It is "the mind of Christ,"[1] rather than the literal example of Jesus, that is the criterion for the Christian.

But the Gospel in the Apostolic Age was much more than the announcement that an authoritative teacher had appeared, or that a perfect life had been lived. It was the announcement that the new life had been made possible for others by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. With absolute unanimity, so far as we know, the Gospel was defined in the Apostolic Age in relation to these facts; and it is in relation to them that the ethics of the Gospel have their distinctiveness revealed. Christian morality depends upon the Cross. The Gnostics rightly saw that the Cross was the distinctive thing in Christianity. As Bigg said, "the Christians adopted for their sign not a portrait of Jesus, but His Cross." That was "the Horos" or "Boundary" which separated Christianity from theosophy and all other religions.[2] "Neither the doctrine of the Trinity, nor that of the Incarnation expresses the deepest essence of the Christian religion," said George Matheson, "there is

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 16.

[2] *The Church's Task under the Roman Empire*, pp. xi, xv.

something which lies beneath both, and that is the idea of the Cross." [1]

The centrality of the Cross was the teaching of all the writers of the New Testament. So far as "the pillars" of the Churches were concerned we have clear and unimpeachable authority that the Gospel was understood in this way. Right in the centre of the most controversial period, to a church divided by party spirit, and in which he had many enemies, Paul boldly declared that Cephas, James, and the rest understood the Gospel to be, as he understood it to be, a proclamation of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for human sin, according to the Scriptures. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received [that is the Gospel] how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. . . . Whether then it be I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed." [2] So far as the evidence shows, that statement was never challenged. There was absolute unanimity in respect to the meaning of "the Gospel."

This unanimity is seen in the documents. There is hardly an epistle, however short and however occasional in character, which does not remind us of the Cross and Resurrection. The Epistle of James is no real exception, for "the Lord" who is there called "the glory" was certainly not "lying in some Syrian tomb," but would return to earth again. The coming of the Lord was at hand. And if Hort was right in his rendering, "Ye condemned the Righteous. Doth He not now resist you?" we have an explicit reference to the Cross and Christ's victory over death.[3] Heresies such as Antinomianism and the resurrection heresy of Hymenæus may be regarded as indirect witness to the predominance of the Cross and Resurrection in the teaching of the Apostles. Within the Christian community these facts were central. No church,

[1] *Growth of the Spirit of Christianity*, I. p. 16.
[2] 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4, 11. [3] James v. 5, 6, 7.

I think, in the Apostolic Age tried to get on without the Cross and Resurrection, or would have been regarded by the Apostles as Christian, if it had so endeavoured. Of the unanimity there can be no reasonable doubt. The "Gospel" meant this and nothing other than this. The "Gospel of the Kingdom of God" was the "Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God." The "Gospel of Jesus Christ" was the Gospel regarding His death and victory. The whole Christian life is made to depend on faith in Jesus Christ as risen from the dead.[1] That was the supreme demonstration of His Divine Sonship,[2] the key to the Mysteries of the Kingdom.

The essential connection between the Christian facts and the Christian manner of life is made plain throughout the New Testament. It is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which, according to Professor E. F. Scott, is non-mystical in character. It may seem strange to some of us that a writer like the author of Hebrews, who dwells with more than Platonic emphasis on the reality of the invisible, heavenly world and the Christian's present participation in it, should not be called "mystical." But we need not quarrel about words. Does not Professor Scott, however, go a little too far when he says that there is "no suggestion of union with Christ, or of a new life imparted by Him to believers."[3] The leading ideas of the Epistle, such as the High-priestly work of Jesus Christ and the better covenant and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ imply a union of the most intimate and personal kind, whether we call it mystical or moral. Could the writer of the epistle have suggested more forcibly the actuality of a new life imparted by Christ than by saying that His blood cleanses the conscience "from dead works to serve the living God"?[4] It is to that blood that "we are come";[5] and when it has cleansed our consciences from dead works, we begin in the power of a new life to serve the living God; and through Christ

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 17. [2] Rom. i. 4. [3] *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 12.
[4] Heb. ix. 14. [5] Heb. xii. 22–24.

offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God.[1] The impartation and maintenance of the new life through union with Christ seem not only suggested, but very clearly expressed.

In the writings of Peter also the beginning, continuance and perfecting of the moral life are associated with the miraculous facts of the Gospel. The new birth, the begetting unto a living hope, came through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.[2] The good conscience, as well as the living hope, is connected with the Resurrection.[3] Redemption from a vain manner of life is through the blood of Christ.[4] We are "healed" by His stripes. He bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we "having died unto sins might live unto righteousness."[5] Grace is brought to us in the revelation of Jesus Christ.[6] He is our example.[7] We are to be armed with the same mind.[8] The good manner of life is "in Christ."[9] Christians have fellowship with Christ now, and eternal glory in the time to come.[10] Christ is in the believer's heart, to be sanctified there as Lord.[11]

The connection of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ with the moral life is illustrated and enforced in a great variety of ways by the Apostle Paul and the Apostle John. The importance of the historical facts is insisted on, and they are to be ever kept in remembrance. They are the ground of hope for the future Coming of the Lord, when Christians will see Him as He is and be like Him,[12] and they are also the conditions for the rise and growth of the new life within the soul. Christians died with Christ that they might live with Him and for Him and in Him. They rose with Him and must seek the things that are above. For them to live is Christ. And Christ is formed within them "the hope of Glory."[13] Many pages might be

[1] Heb. xiii. 15. [2] 1 Peter i. 3. [3] 1 Peter iii. 21.
[4] 1 Peter i. 18. [5] 1 Peter ii. 24. [6] 1 Peter i. 7.
[7] 1 Peter ii. 21. [8] 1 Peter iv. 1. [9] 1 Peter iii. 16.
[10] 1 Peter v. 10. [11] 1 Peter iii. 15. [12] 1 John iii. 2.
[13] 2 Cor. v. 14; Col. iii. 1; Phil. i. 21; Rom. vi. 4; Col. i. 27, etc.

filled with illustrations of the essential union of the Christian with His Lord; for the Apostles seem to vie with one another in their endeavour to express its necessity and moral significance. But it is sufficient here to remember the unanimity.

The practice of the Apostles in basing the moral life on the supernatural and historical facts of the Gospel will hardly be denied, but some have doubted the wisdom of doing so. Would it not be better to base the moral life on the character of God, as revealed in the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount? It might be, if Jesus had completed His teaching there; or if Jesus had wished to teach solely by what He said and not by what He did; or if He had regarded Himself merely as a teacher. But none of these suppositions are well founded. Jesus had many more things to say to His disciples, after He had opened the Kingdom to them by His death. He came not only to teach, but to give His life a ransom for many. "The act on which He is set, and on which all will turn, is His own death."[1] The teaching as given in the Gospels culminates in the decisive events that marked the close of the earthly career, and which made His further revelation through the Holy Spirit possible.

Others would found Christian morality on a reverent study of the consciousness of Jesus. But the inner life of Jesus is necessarily largely beyond our powers of insight and interpretation, and is separated from ours by its sinlessness. The experience of a sinner, saved by grace, can never be the same as that of the Saviour, who saves from sin. Jesus taught His disciples a form of prayer in which He could not unite with them. The consciousness of Jesus must have been, in important respects, different from ours. He has life in Himself: we only in Him. He has immediate access to the Father: we only in Him.

[1] Scott Holland, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 6: "The death is the goal of our Lord's own thought, interest, purpose, all through the Galilean mission."

He has been tempted to the uttermost, yet without sin; so that His communion with God is unsullied, and His sympathy with sinful men perfect. We have broken down times without number, and in Him is our reconciliation and peace with God and man. We are complete in Him.

CHAPTER V

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

RENAN thought that the strongest proof of the originality of Jesus was not to be found in the novelty of the truths He taught, these having been for the most part anticipated by the prophets of Israel, in the eighth century, but in the society He created.[1] In saying this, Renan did less than justice to the originality of the teaching of Jesus; but he emphasised something which Jesus Himself regarded as of great importance, the creation of a Society, imbued with His Spirit and loyal to His aims. The prophets were often voices crying in the wilderness, but Jesus gathered round Him a band of followers, drawn from the most unlikely quarters; moulded them to His will; anointed them with His Spirit; and continued from the throne of His heavenly glory to direct their work for the Kingdom of God.

The moral life of the Christian is life in a Christian community. He belongs, not simply to a family, civic community, state or race, but primarily to a Christian community. To kinship with God the Father, and loyalty to Jesus Christ, which membership in the Kingdom implies, is added a new citizenship. The Christian Society is a spiritual commonwealth.

This community was often in the thought of Jesus, as He lived His life among men. He called one and another

[1] Cp. Seeley: "A moralist speaking with authority and perpetuating his doctrine by means of a society," *Ecce Homo*, p. xi. "La seule société qu'il eut devant les yeux, c'est la société celeste, qu'il considerait comme le renversement de la société terrestre." Janet, *Histoire de la Science Politique*, I. p. 287.

not only to follow Him but to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom. He chose the twelve that they might be with Him. He revealed to them the spirit which was to animate the new Society, and the work which its members were to do. He did not concern Himself, so far as the narratives inform us, with the outward organisation of the Society. One thing He expressly enjoined, that they should call no man father on the earth and that there should be no hierarchy among them. It was a distinguishing mark of the new Society, that those who joined it should not seek glory one of another, but that the greater should become as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve. The one new commandment which He gave them, was the commandment that they should love one another, "as I have loved you." That was to be the distinguishing mark of the new Society. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."[1] This was the bond of the new Society: this was the badge of discipleship, which even the world would recognise, the outward and visible sign of the new community. How strange! How simple! We have added many other "marks," fearing lest the world should not understand who we were or what we stood for. But Jesus did not fear. His Society was to be recognised not by its outward organisation, but by its new morality; and His presence in the midst would make that possible.

It is the relation of the Christian to his Lord that determines the character of the new Society. Other societies depend upon mutual contract, mutual need, mutual convenience, and the natural sociability of men: this upon the relation of the soul to God through Jesus Christ. It descends out of heaven from God. It is not evolved from below. It is a new creation. The bonds which unite Christians to one another are invisible, even as the links which unite the Christian to his invisible Lord.

[1] Matt. xxiii. 9, 10; xx. 26; xviii. 1; Mark ix. 35; x. 43; Luke xxii. 26; John xiii. 14; xv. 12; xiii. 35.

Jesus prayed that His disciples might be one, not according to any type of union with which the world had become familiar, but " as we are one "—" that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." [1] Outward forms are useful only as they suggest, reveal, and embody the inner constitution of the Church, which is nothing less than the holy love of God Himself. So Jesus said little concerning the outward organisation of His followers, but much in word and deed regarding the love of God, which was the creative principle of the new community.

It has often been remarked how seldom Jesus used the word " Church." There are only two recorded instances. But how clearly they reveal the essential features of the new Society—the frank confession of Himself as the Christ, the Son of the Living God,[2] and the equally frank acknowledgment of wrongs done to the brotherhood.[3] These things are necessary to the very existence of the Church as Jesus conceived it : and all that was added to this conception of the Church in Apostolic times may be regarded as exposition and illustration of these fundamental principles. It is in the confession of Jesus Christ that Christians realise their union with one another. It is in confession, not to a priest, but to the brother we have wronged, that we retain our place in the Christian Society. The man who will not acknowledge his fault, when it is brought home to his conscience in the three ways Jesus enjoins, cuts himself off from the brotherhood, for without truth there can be no fellowship.

When we turn to the other writings of the New Testament we find the idea of the Christian Society reproduced with great vividness. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and the fulfilment of His promise in the gift of the Holy Spirit, made all things new to the disciples. The Society was transfigured. Jesus was in the midst, in a way the disciples could not previously understand, and all authority had been given to Him in heaven and on

[1] John xvii 22, 26. [2] Matt. xvi. 18. [3] Matt. xviii. 17.

earth. He now no longer seemed to them the despised and rejected of men; but the Lord of All, and the quickening Spirit. His claims had been vindicated. The love wherewith He loved His own, which were in the world, had triumphed over all the powers of the evil one, over the antagonism of men, and over their own infidelity. Their attitude to Jesus was changed. They now no longer prayed "Master, we would that Thou shouldest do whatsoever we shall ask,"[1] but, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"[2] And with the clearer vision of the meaning of the Kingdom and the purpose of the Master, their relation one to another was changed. The old rivalries and desires for the pre-eminence were scattered to the winds. The glory of their Lord became now the bond of union. Neither human ambition nor human weakness, neither Cæsarism nor the craven spirit of the slave, neither "the will-to-power" nor the motive which Nietzsche assigned to the Christians, was the cause of the rise of the new Society, but the altogether new sense of power which came to them through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, the reconciliation of the Cross, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Unlike other societies, the Christian Church arose, not in the lust of power, nor in a sense of weakness, but in the consciousness of strength. It arose to testify and to give, not to get, to rule, or to defend. That is the reason why it has survived. It does not exist for itself. It exists to make manifest the Grace and Power of Christ.

This conception of the new Society is presented in a variety of ways in the Apostolic writings. The Church is the bride of Christ. It is the house of God. It is complete only in Him. He is the chief corner-stone of the edifice. It is a holy temple existing for the worship of God. It is the body of which Jesus Christ is the animating spirit, or head. It is a royal and holy priesthood, an elect race, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, "that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who

[1] Mark x. 35. [2] Acts xxii. 10.

called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."[1] Whatever the image, the meaning is always the same. The Society has no existence, no life, no function apart from Christ.

As the writers of the New Testament follow the example of Jesus in thinking much regarding the new Society, so too they follow Him in seldom speaking of it as the "Church." Local communities are often spoken of as "Churches," but the whole Society very rarely as "the Church." Peter, to whom the keys of the Kingdom were given, never mentions "the Church," of which he is reputed by some to be the chief bishop. Nor is there any clear reference to it in the writings of John or James or Jude. The original or Palestinian disciples do not use the word, though Matthew records the two sayings of Jesus in which it is mentioned. They were familiar with the Hebrew ecclesia, but if they thought of its functions as passing over to a Christian ecclesia, it is curious that they dropped the name, or applied it to the local churches. And the Epistle to the Hebrews suggests that the Jewish ecclesia was subjected to the same kind of transformation as other Jewish institutions, which are there referred to. The shadow in this case also gives place to the substance. It is not perpetuated in the Christian community any more than were Jewish sacrifices and altars and priesthood. All external ordinances, the old covenant, the law, the sanctuary, the altar, priesthood, the sacrifices, gave place to "a better."[2] To exclude the ecclesia from the transforming influence of the Gospel, and pass it on unchanged into the new order, which is what Catholicism practically does, is to prefer the shadow to the substance and to show scant respect for the consistency of an inspired writer. If the sanctuary and the priest and the altar belong to an invisible heavenly sphere of reality,[3] so too does "the Church."

[1] Rev. xxii. 17; Heb. iii. 6; Eph. v. 32; ii. 22; iv. 12; 1 Cor. xii. 12; 1 Peter ii. 2–9.

[2] Heb. vii. 22, etc. [3] Heb. viii. 2; vii. 11; ix. 12; xiii. 10.

That this is the point of view which the writer of the Epistle takes is not only suggested by analogy, but supported by the great passage in which he speaks of "the Church." He is there definitely contrasting the Hebrew ecclesia as assembled at Sinai and the Christian community to which the Hebrew Christians had now come. This is no earthly society or visible organisation, but "the heavenly Jerusalem, and innumerable hosts of angels, and the general assembly and Church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and God the Judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel."[1] The Church is here regarded as an invisible heavenly order of reality. It cannot be taken out of such a context, and regarded as an earthly institution. "The Church" is an object of faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as it is in the Creeds. We cannot see it any more than we can see our Invisible Lord. But when we meet in His name we "come to it," and find as Westcott said that "the largest part of every Christian congregation is always invisible." It must be so, for He is there, and, however little it may be given us to realise it, the whole Body of which He is the head.

We must not materialise the idea of the Church because many who belong to it are still in the flesh. The Church can find only very imperfect and partial embodiment in any visible institution or institutions. The invisible is the real and the eternal, the actual Church. Members of it recognise one another by the presence of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. Even the world may recognise the marks of this heavenly citizenship. To confuse the Church of Christ with the outward body or institution, organised in a particular way, is to put an unnecessary stumbling-block in the way of those who would believe.

The New Testament writers, as it appears to me, never do this; and so I cannot but regard it as unfortunate that

[1] Heb. xii. 22.

such an important work on the Church and Ministry as that edited by the late Professor Swete should contain a discussion of the New Testament conception of the Church with the greater part of the evidence left out. It is not very difficult to show that "the Church was Catholic from the outset,"[1] if much of the main evidence on the other side is ignored, and the rest interpreted in the light of some later century. The Christian ecclesia is for Canon Mason a visible and legal society like Israel. The shepherds of the Old Testament were not priests and prophets but kings, and so the Christian pastor is a king after the Davidic order.[2] The kind of authority exercised in the Church is the same as that of the old Hebrew kings, and Hort's contention that the Apostles claimed only moral authority is characterised as "a subtle over-refinement."[3]

But where in the New Testament is "the Church" as such, still less her clergy, said to exercise legal authority? Where is "it" or "she" said to exercise any authority at all? Where in fact is it said to do anything? There is no text in the New Testament which represents "the Church" as doing anything. It is never said to assemble in a visible form for the transaction of business, or even for prayer. No legislative power is anywhere claimed for it. The nearest approach to united action as ascribed to "the Church" is in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where the Apostle says "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God." But even here "the Church" is not the agent, but the instrument, and the united witness is not given to the world but to those who occupy "the heavenly places." It is the latter who can receive the witness of the Church as a whole to the manifold wisdom of God. The time for the world to receive it has not yet come. When the united work of Christians is referred to, it is individuals or groups who act together. The "Church" as a whole is

[1] *Early History of the Church and Ministry*, p. 56.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 42. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

never said to act, and never empowers anyone to act for it.

The moral value of life in the Christian community is all the greater, because the form of society is not stereotyped, or the pressure, exerted within its borders, of a legislative kind. Whatever may be true of the Churches, and they may all be still hampered, as Clutton Brock said, "by their own past law-making, by their will-to-power, which has prevented them from ever being purely Churches";[1] it is supremely true of "the Church" that it is not in the least degree a legal or legislative body. All rule and authority and dominion and power of a worldly kind are entirely foreign to the Church of Christ. No legal society can express the common life, or aid the common life, of those who are no longer under law but under grace. They need a different kind of environment; and that is possible in the Society contemplated by Jesus, and inaugurated at Pentecost. In a life controlled by the Holy Spirit there is no fear that Christians will not recognise one another or be recognised by the world. It is because we revert to the type of authority usual in the world that we do not feel that the Christian Society is invested with the powers of the world to come. It is because we conform our organisation to the models of the world, that the world is confused about us and rightly despises us. Each type of morality must have its own kind of society in which to develop; and it must express itself in forms agreeable to its spirit. This is very generally recognised in all forms of institutional and legal morality. It is an old saying, that the best education is to live in accordance with the ἦθος of a good community. But it is still more true of the one form of morality which is neither institutional nor legal. The free life of the Holy Spirit seeks a society of freedom, in which to live and move. It cannot find its home in the sphere of law either in Church or State. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has liberated Christians from the law of sin and

[1] *Faith and Freedom*, p. 274.

death; and they may not return again to the beggarly elements of the world. The Christian is still "under law to Christ," but it is not the old law. The development of Christian personality depends upon the action and reaction of kindred minds, like any other form of culture. We are helpers of one another's faith and sharers of one another's joy. Canon law is Judaic not Christian.

The need of Christian fellowship, the fellowship of Christian men in work and worship, is everywhere implied or expressed in the New Testament. And yet we tend to neglect if not despise it. There is something in most Christians, and in most Christian communities, that offends our taste or pride if not our moral sensibilities. It is very easy to find excuses for aloofness. But it is also very foolish. There is no substitute for genuine Christian fellowship, that fellowship which can only live in the atmosphere of a supernatural faith and hope and love. The kindness of many in the world is a beautiful thing. The stimulus of fellowship in common pursuits, in learning, in the arts, in business and play is often very pleasant. But it is different from the deeper fellowship of those who strive together for the faith of the Gospel. The fellowship of the Christian community is the deepest, broadest, and most life-giving, for it is with all the saints that we come to "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and are filled unto all the fullness of God."[1] The neglect of Christian fellowship is one result of the watering down of the New Testament idea of brotherhood. If all men are brethren, cannot we find all the fellowship we need in the world? But all men are not brethren in the New Testament sense of the word. "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother and sister and mother."[2] Brotherhood here is not a natural bond, but a moral and spiritual relationship. It is the kinship of those who through faith and obedience have become "perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect, kind to the unthankful and

[1] Eph. iii. 19. [2] Mark iii. 35.

the evil."[1] It is men who have "so learned of Christ," that are the children of the Kingdom. The brotherhood is not a dormant possibility but a vital fact.

And so we need to return to the more ethical teaching of Jesus, and remember that the household to which we belong is "the household of the faith." We are all sons of God by faith.[2] We are baptized by the One Spirit into the one body,[3] and when the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost the potential becomes an active, living, relationship. But it is equally possible for us to become as Jesus said the children of the devil.[4] The mind of Jesus moved always in the ethical sphere.

As it is among our spiritual kindred that our most intimate life must be lived, Jesus provided for this in the new Society He created. All the New Testament writers emphasise the social side of the Faith. It is very prominent, as Westcott pointed out, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the conceptions of the household, the city, and the world to come. Jesus Christ Himself is the centre of the new family. "Behold I and the children which God hath given me." "Whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end."[5] The Epistles of Paul are full of the idea of the Christian brotherhood. The Christian Society has the first claim upon the beneficence of Christian men. "As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of Faith."[6] Philanthropy begins at home. The Body of which Paul thinks is not the Stoic *civitas* but the spiritual Society of which Jesus Christ is the Head. "Ye are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God."[7] The Apostle John delights to think of all Christians as little children, requiring for their growth the congenial atmosphere of the Christian brotherhood. So precious is that brotherhood,

[1] Matt. v. 48; Luke vi. 35.
[2] Gal. iii. 26; John i. 12.
[3] 1 Cor. xii. 13.
[4] John viii. 44.
[5] Heb. ii. 13; iii. 6.
[6] Gal. vi. 10.
[7] Eph. ii. 19.

that a man must defend it, if necessary, with his life.[1] He had heard his Master say: "The Good Shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep."[2] Fellowship with the Father and with the Son, fellowship with one another—the kinship of the Kingdom—this is life eternal. So Peter too had learnt from Jesus Christ to set the Christian Society first. The command is specially to love the brotherhood.[3] Love of the brethren is the best preparation for the wider love the Christian should show towards all men.[4]

[1] 1 John iii. 16.
[2] John x. 11.
[3] 1 Peter ii. 17.
[4] 2 Peter i. 7.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATION TO THE WORLD

THE difference between the Ethics of the Gospel and an ethic which is merely philosophical, or one which is based on natural sciences, is illustrated by the fact that only now at length do we reach the point at which they meet. All that has gone before, the consideration of the moral life in relation to the Kingdom of God, to Jesus Christ, and to the Christian community, is outside the scope of moral science, as commonly understood. It may be regarded as theology, or mythology, or metaphysics, but it is not ethics. The moral life is thought to rest upon natural facts, or upon the more or less abstract constructions of the human intellect based upon those facts. There is no room for the supernatural.

But if Christianity is true, morality has more to do with the supernatural than with the natural. It has its roots in the unseen world. It implies a larger universe than "Nature," or than any philosophical scheme which is based merely on natural facts. It is this consideration which gives to it its peculiar interest and its unique power. A morality which starts with the world of men and things, starts with an abstraction, an arbitrary, though it may be convenient, limitation of the fullness of reality; and in comparison will appear formal, narrow and meagre. It is not surprising that so open-minded a moralist as Henry Sidgwick, after writing his well-known *History of Ethics*, confessed that he had found the Christian section the more interesting part of his work.[1] The universe

[1] *Memoir*, p. 344.

with which it is concerned is so much fuller and more concrete.

But the Ethics of the Gospel and the Ethics of Nature do at length meet in the world of the seen and temporal. Both have to do with man's behaviour towards his fellows, and with his relation to the material universe. They share this common ground. But they occupy it differently. The task of Christianity is to bring the morality of a heavenly world into relation with this; whereas the moralist wishes to describe, or explain, or justify, a morality native to earth. Jesus Christ said: "My Kingdom is not of this world"; "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect";[1] and sought to teach men the principles of the heavenly world. The philosopher on the other hand tells us that the morality proper for this world must be deduced from the nature of the world, and from the nature of the men who belong to it. For the Christian "the good is an eternal reality, which we doubtless discover in the course of evolution, but which is independent of this evolution";[2] whereas for others the good is itself the product and crown of the evolutionary process. It belongs entirely to the mundane order.

What is here spoken of from the human standpoint as "discovery," is from the Divine side "revelation." It is not man's search, but the revelation of God, that brings to light the absolute Good. Nevertheless we maintain that it is experience, as truly as any of the findings of the scientist. The Ethics of the Gospel are not remote from life, unknowable and unverifiable. "The communication of the Spirit with ours is a verifiable, psychological fact, and not simply a fact of faith."[3] What is claimed is, that the Christian's world of experience is larger than that of the natural scientist.

It is, of course, often difficult for one who concentrates

[1] John xviii. 36; Matt. v. 48.

[2] Ehrhardt, *Morale Religieuse et Morale Laïque*, p. 27.

[3] Monbrum, *Maine de Biran*, p. 251. "If psychology deliberately passes by in silence the religious fact it is only a mutilated science," p. 276.

his attention on a single order of experience to adopt a wider view. "If Jesus," says Lahy, in his *Morale de Jésu*, "in addition to His sentimentality had possessed the science of Karl Marx, He would have secured the permanence of His work by founding it not on vague belief, but on real experiences."[1] Here we have the blunt confession of one accustomed to limit experience to one section of reality, or one order of facts, in which he happens to be interested, a revelation of the professional and parochial mind. It was on the contrary just because Jesus did not live and think in the limited world of Karl Marx, that He secured the permanence of His work. The Kingdom of God was not to Jesus a vague belief, but a living actuality; His own place in it and work for it a real experience. Therefore it is that He has affected, and continues to affect, the course of human life and history more than any other.

The attitude of the Christian to the world is one of detachment. There can be no doubt that this is the teaching of the New Testament. Christians should be quite prepared to accept the reproach of being "other-worldly." "They are not of the world," said Jesus, "even as I am not of the world."[2] The truth of the charge is implied in our acceptance of the teaching of Jesus regarding the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God. That kingdom is not a kingdom of this world, nor is it a kingdom situated merely in this world. It is not mundane in itself. It is more than mundane in its location. There are many mansions in the Father's house, and none of them are outside the Kingdom. We make the Kingdom too small, if we regard it simply as the earthly arena in which the will of the Father is being done. The Kingdom is no more secular than heaven itself.

Attempts to secularise the Kingdom find no support in the New Testament. The world in which Jesus lived, and into which He introduced His disciples, was a Divine Society. It might be necessary for Him to obey the ordin-

[1] P. 7.

[2] John xv. 19; xvii. 16.

ances of men, that He might "fulfil all righteousness";[1] but His life was not based on any human model or determined by human institutions. He did what He saw the Father doing,[2] not what the world around Him was doing. He lived a life of complete independence of the world, because a life of complete dependence upon God.

The Christian's separation from the world is emphasised everywhere by those who had learnt of Jesus. "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him," said John.[3] "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind," said Paul.[4] "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" said James.[5] "I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims,"[6] said Peter. These are four texts taken from four different sources, and they might be multiplied many times. They show clearly enough that the Apostolic writers thought of the Christian's citizenship as being in heaven.[7] The city to which he belongs is a city which descends out of heaven from God.[8] It does not ascend like the tower of Babel, or the Humanity of the Positivist.

There is always some shade of depreciation or implied inferiority in the New Testament use of the word "world": but, as its connotation varies, so also does the degree of depreciation. In speaking of the material universe, no-one who inherited the Hebrew tradition would be likely to speak of it with contempt. "Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer."[9] Yet the material world is only relatively good; partly because of what man has made it, and God allowed it to become, in punishment of men's sin; partly also as compared with the eternal world revealed in Jesus Christ. The visible world has no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth. It reveals as a mirror the glory of

[1] Matt. iii. 15. [2] John v. 19. [3] 1 John ii. 15.
[4] Rom. xii. 2. [5] James iv. 4. [6] 1 Peter ii. 11.
[7] Phil. iii. 20. [8] Rev. xxi. 2. [9] 1 Tim. iv 4.

God, even His eternal power and Godhead;[1] but it is passing away.[2] The most beautiful flower would fade and the grace of the fashion of it perish, so would the rich man fade away in his goings.[3] The Christian has "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away reserved in heaven."[4] Yet even the corruptible has its uses. The world should be "used, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away."[5] "All things," said Paul to the Corinthians, "are yours . . . the world or life or death or things present or things to come."[6]

This merely relative depreciation of the material and temporal, infinitely reasonable as it is in the presence of the personal and the eternal, has often been made a reproach to Christianity.[7] The purpose of the Gospel is not to show how exquisitely fitted the mind of man is to the external world, and the external world to the mind of man, as Wordsworth attempted to show in *The Excursion:* but to liberate men from an undue subservience to "Nature" by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and the opening up of an infinitely wider universe of life.

It might, I think, be argued that, in doing this, the Gospel prepared the way for a clearer knowledge and truer appreciation of the beauty even of the finite and the material. The fine arts, as well as those whose aim is utility, have flourished on Christian soil. "The glowing canvases of Italy or of Spain, the stately towers and spires of northern minsters, the thrilling harmonies of Handel or of Bach—these are our answer to the objector, who accuses our faith of discouraging art, or of deadening the sense of beauty."[8] The more abundant life which Jesus brought has stimulated and purified the imaginations of men, and among the "many other things which Jesus

[1] Rom. i. 20. [2] 1 John ii. 17. [3] James i. 11.
[4] 1 Peter i. 4. [5] 1 Cor. vii. 31. [6] 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.
[7] *E.g.* by F. W. Newman, *On the Defective Morality of the New Testament*, p. 29.
[8] I. Gregory Smith, *Characteristics of Christian Morality*, p. 91.

did,"[1] must be reckoned the many things He made possible by the emancipation of the spirit of man. But it is well to notice the silences of the New Testament. "St Paul," we have been told, "had no sense of natural beauty whatever."[2] Men have hesitated to say that of the Master Himself. His appreciation of the beauty of the lilies of the field prevents us. His praise of the flowers has even been called the most original thing in His teaching.[3] That strikes one as a grotesque mis-statement. But the beautiful words of Jesus regarding the lilies have appealed irresistibly to the imaginations and hearts of men. It is all the more necessary that we should not misinterpret them. It is not fair to take the lilies out of their context in the thought of Jesus.[4] Did Jesus admire the lily as an object of "Nature," or as a manifestation of His Father's presence and love? Did He dote upon the flowers, or did He raise the thoughts of His disciples to a region where the flowers never fade? "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."[5]

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."[6] After Jesus had shown what manner of love the Father had bestowed upon men that they should be called and be the children of God, "love" was too great a word to use in relation to the seen and temporal. The love that abides must needs attach itself to the imperishable. "Oh that someone had told me in my youth," said Ruskin, "when all my heart seemed to be set in those colours and clouds, that appear for a little while and then vanish away, how little my love of them would serve me, when the silence of lawn and wood in the dews of the morning should be completed: and all my thoughts should be of those whom, by neither, I was to meet more."[7]

[1] John xxi. 25. [2] P. T. Forsyth, *Christ on Parnassus*, p. 255.
[3] Edwin Abbott. [4] Matt. vi. 28.
[5] Luke xii. 32. [6] 1 John ii. 15.
[7] Quoted by A. Caldecott in *The Philosophy of Religion*, p. 191.

And with regard to money, which is the symbol of material wealth, the attitude of Jesus was a great surprise to His contemporaries. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon"; both Jesus and His Apostles have many hard things to say about riches and especially about covetousness. "Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation." "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." "Take heed and beware of covetousness." "Covetousness is idolatry." "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil."[1] We can see from such passages as these how dangerous a thing Jesus regarded the possession of riches, and how fatal the love of them. They were to be rightly used: they were not to be loved.

So Jesus did not teach the poor that the first thing to be hoped for was improvement in their material conditions. It is curious that the Gospel which sets forth most fully the tenderness and regard Jesus had for the poor, the Gospel of Luke, contains the two sayings which show that neither the mission of John the Baptist nor the mission of Jesus was concerned with economic conditions. To the soldiers John said: "Be content with your wages"; to the man with a grievance, who asked Jesus to speak to his brother that he might divide the inheritance with him, He replied: "Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?"[2] The message of the Forerunner and of Jesus was "give."

Yet this relative indifference to material things, and concentration on the highest of all, has done more than anything else to improve social conditions. It is true of individuals and of communities that if they will seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness all these things will be added.[3] "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth

[1] Matt. vi. 24; Luke vi. 24; Mark x. 25; Luke xii. 15; Eph. v. 5; 1 Tim. vi. 10, etc.

[2] Luke iii. 14; xii. 14.

[3] Matt. vi. 33.

of God."[1] As one ardent group of social reformers has recently said: "If we accept this view (of the eternal purpose of God) we can no longer regard material progress, a good world in a physical sense, as necessarily a main object of the Rule of God, nor can we regard the greatest comfort of the greatest number as necessarily the proper aim of social reform."[2]

The New Testament teaching regarding the external world and its goods is an alluring theme, especially when so many are seeking "a good world in a physical sense." It would be very instructive to consider it in its native environment, to place it against the background of contemporary Jewish and heathen beliefs. For the modern view of the world is so different from the ancient. The delight in "Nature" for its own sake, or because it is so "exquisitely fitted to the mind of man," is modern rather than ancient. Neither Greek nor Roman nor Jew, still less any of the Eastern thinkers, who regarded the material as the unreal, or the corrupt, could have fully appreciated Wordsworth's attitude to "Nature."

So far as the Greek, and especially the Latin poets, are concerned, the contrasts have been recently presented again in a very attractive way by Mr E. E. Sikes, who concludes that while there is, particularly in Virgil, some approach towards the more modern standpoint, "the differences between the ancient and modern conceptions of natural beauty are deeper and more striking then their resemblances."[3]

If then the Apostle Paul's indebtedness to the Greek and to the Roman had been much greater than there is any reason to suppose it was, he could hardly have learnt from them to supply what modern taste may find lacking in his writings.

[1] Matt. iv. 4; cf. John vi. 27.

[2] C.O.P.E.C. *Report. The Nature of God*, p. 25.

[3] *Roman Poetry*, p. 137. J. W. Duff in *A Literary History of Rome*, p. 453, finds the philosophic and romantic contending for the mastery in Virgil.

But modern taste is changing, some would say has already changed. The wonderful beauty of "Nature" and its exquisite adaptiveness to the pleasure and the good of man is recognised as only part of the account, which poetry, no less than science, is bound to give. "Intellectually we find ourselves at home with Nature for her order seems the reflection of our own intelligence. But morally she answers not to the human spirit's questionings and cravings: rather she seems to contradict and despise them." [1]

> Nature, with equal mind,
> Sees all her sons at play,
> Sees man control the wind,
> The wind sweep man away;
> Allows the proudly riding and the foundering bark.[2]

"Nature and man can never be fast friends," Matthew Arnold tells us: and Mr Hardy takes up the strain:

> Since then no grace I find
> Taught me of trees,
> Turn I back to my kind
> Worthy as these.[3]

If Mr Hardy finds no grace in Nature, ought we to be greatly surprised at the silence of the Apostle Paul? But Paul turned back not to his "kind," but to the grace of God in Jesus Christ his Lord. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." [4]

Yet the death to the world, of which the Apostle speaks, is only one part of his message. More keenly than Huxley or any nineteenth-century scientist or poet, the Apostles felt the burden of the mystery of "the whole

[1] Seth, *Principles of Ethics*, p. 415.
[2] Matthew Arnold, *Empedocles on Etna*.
[3] Quoted by Mr Sikes, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
[4] Gal. vi. 14.

creation groaning and travailing in pain until now,"[1] of "a world lying in the evil one,"[2] and of an impending dissolution of the visible order.[3] But they saw beyond all this confusion and pain, "the manifestation of the sons of God;" and the Apocalypse of the lower creations redeemed from purposelessness and bondage; and "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."[4] As Professor Nash has said: "By the dogma of the Second Coming nature and history are put into the hands of Christ."[5] And it was the Gospel which made this possible.

In some of these quotations, it may be said, we have already passed beyond the view of the world, merely as an external order apart from man, and united with it the idea of a world of sinful men. The Apostles probably did not draw the distinctions as sharply as we are inclined to do. But there are other passages in which the word has a different connotation. If John says "Love not the world," he also tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His Son for its redemption.[6] In the second case "the world" plainly includes those who have the power to believe, men who can respond to the moral appeal of the Cross. And the Christian must learn to love the world in this sense with something of the love of God, even that part of the world which is most actively hostile to himself and to the Gospel he confesses. The active attempt to redeem the sinner by service, sympathy and love, which Mr Montefiore regards as a new thing in religion,[7] certainly comes nearer to the original element in the teaching of Jesus than His praise of the flowers. The love of one's enemies, which Jesus raised "to the nth degree and made a principle of," has always been regarded as one of the more distinctive things in Christian morality. Texts might be quoted from all the sources. But the best evidence is to

[1] Rom. viii. 22. [2] 1 John v. 19. [3] 2 Peter iii. 10.
[4] Rom. viii. 21; Rev. iv. 11; 2 Peter iii. 13; Rev. xxii., etc.
[5] *Genesis of the Social Conscience*, p. 94. [6] John iii. 16.
[7] *Hibbert Journal*, xx. 3, p. 435. *Religious Teaching of Jesus*, p. 135.

be found in the life and death of Jesus; and in the devotion of those, who faced poverty and shame, suffering and imprisonment and death, that they might make others partakers of the heavenly gifts.

Yet even in this sense of the word the Christian will be detached from the "world." The Friend of publicans and sinners, who lived in the world, and went about doing good, confessed that He did not belong to it. "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate," was a condition for becoming sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. "Let us therefore go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." [1]

Whatever shade of disparagement may be attached to the "world" in its various contexts, "the spirit of the world," is an evil thing.[2] The spirit which leads a man to identify himself with the world, is "not of God." And as that spirit works in him, it is manifested in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, which again are "not of the Father." [3] By His death and resurrection Jesus liberated men from the bondage of the seen and temporal, brought life and incorruption to light, and empowered His disciples to testify to all men by word and deed of a Kingdom which could never be shaken." [4]

[1] 2 Cor. vi. 17; Heb. xiii. 13.
[2] 1 Cor. ii. 12; Eph. ii. 12.
[3] 1 John ii. 16.
[4] 2 Tim. i. 10; Heb. xii. 28.

CHAPTER VII

THE GOSPEL AND SELF-CULTURE

IN any exposition of the ethics of the Gospel it is fitting that the consideration of the moral life in relation to the self should come last; and this in spite of the fact that Jesus attached so much importance to the individual. He saw more clearly than Aristotle, or any other teacher, the necessity of a community life for the development of personality. His friendly attitude to the State, and especially to the Family, shows how truly He recognised the value of these institutions. But He saw also much more clearly than others the limitations of all existing social institutions, and introduced men into a fellowship, larger and more fruitful. The Kingdom of God with its implications of Divine fellowship; the mystic union of the soul with Jesus Christ; membership in the august society of the Church or City of God; service in the world for the highest interests of mankind, all these things show the paramount importance of society for the development of individual character.

This fourfold relation of the moral life, as set forth in the New Testament, to the Kingdom of God, to Jesus Christ, to the Brotherhood, and to the World, makes the ethics of the Gospel less egoistic than any other. The welfare of the individual is secured, as it is secured in no other system; but it is only through a self-forgetfulness and devotion impossible elsewhere. It is the Gospel alone, which points the way to complete emancipation from an irrational and destructive egoism. The individual is not the centre of the universe, and Humanity is not its goal.

Within the larger universe revealed by Jesus self acquires a new meaning, a new value, a new place, and new functions. Before it are opened up possibilities of growth and development undreamed of hitherto. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be." The Christian is "predestinated to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ." He is an "heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ." "All things are his." And yet these things are only his, as he is Christ's.[1] That is the humbling thought, and the condition of greatness within the Kingdom of God. The offence of the Cross must be faced and overcome. It is only through the forgiveness of Calvary that self can be dethroned, and a man enter into the life of perfect freedom. There is no other power, which can change the character of a man's life, and make self-regarding aims entirely subordinate to the supreme purpose of the universe, which is primarily neither the salvation of the soul, nor the happiness of mankind, but the Glory of God, that is, the victory of His righteousness and the satisfaction of His love.

There is nothing here of the magnificence of Aristotle's self-centred μεγαλόψοχος, nor the megalomania of Stoicism in its purest form, nor even of the self-satisfaction of Job, before the humbling vision came to him.[2] Not what a man owes to himself, but what he owes to his God is the first thought of the Christian man. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength and thy neighbour as thyself." The Christian is a debtor rather than a benefactor. There is nothing which he has not received, and much that he has withheld. He is simply a steward of the manifold grace of Christ, and not always faithful. When he has done all, he must confess, that he has only done that which it was his duty to do.[3] And he has not always done that. As contrasted

[1] 1 John iii. 2; Rom. viii. 29, 17; 1 Cor. iii. 22.
[2] Job xlii. 6.
[3] Mark xii. 29 ff.; 1 Cor. iv. 7; 1 Peter iv. 10; Luke xvii. 10.

with many naturalistic and idealistic philosophies this may appear a very lowly place to give the self. Self-realisation, which so many have thought to be the chief duty of man, but which has seemed to others, as to the late Professor Robert Adamson, rather a conundrum than an intelligible ideal,[1] is in the teaching of Jesus neither the one nor the other, but a mystery of the Kingdom, revealed to those who seek first its righteousness. "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's shall save it."[2]

God is to be loved with all the heart. He is not simply an object of contemplation, as with Aristotle, or of intellectual love, as with Spinoza, but of a love which quickens and engages all man's powers. Some eccentric modern philosophers have maintained that it is impossible for man to love God, and that the idea is an absurd one. The Bible on the contrary says that God is the only object that a man can love with all his heart. A man is never commanded to love the creature with all his heart, because it is impossible. A man may love his neighbour as himself, possibly better even than himself. But though a man live and die for another, he has not really loved him with all his heart. It is only in loving God that the heart expands, so to speak, to its full extent, and all its latent capacities are revealed. As F. W. Robertson put it, Jesus Christ is the whole heart's expression. The heart was made for God, and cannot grow to its full stature or put forth all its powers until it finds its home in God.

As between self-love and benevolence Jesus does not in His summary of the Law decide. Love to oneself and love to one's neighbour are equated.[3] Did Jesus by the new commandment which He gave to His disciples remove the equation, and teach that a man was always to prefer his neighbour's interest to his own?[4]

[1] *Modern Philosophy*, II. 97.
[2] Mark viii. 35.
[3] Mark xii. 31.
[4] John xv. 12.

Jesus Christ and His Apostles certainly show that self-denial is absolutely essential, and that service is a chief characteristic of Christian morality. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."[1] But the conflict between egoism and altruism takes a different form from that which it has assumed in the agelong controversy of the philosophers. Occasionally we find the two aspects of duty put side by side, "not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others,"[2] "bear ye one another's burdens . . . for every man must bear his own burden."[3] But neither aspect of duty would have been regarded by the Apostles as correctly stated, till it had been brought into the wider context of the Kingdom of God. There are no absolute duties to others, even as there are no absolute duties to self. On this level of life there is certain to be conflict. Sometimes an enlightened self-love, which is not to be confused with selfishness, and sometimes a perfectly disinterested benevolence may seem the better guide. But fortunately for the Christian the decision does not depend simply upon the balancing of these opposites. "No man liveth to himself," and no man liveth to his neighbour. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's."[4] Any apparent conflict between different classes of duties can only be solved by looking at them in their wider relations to the Kingdom of God, which Jesus has revealed. Sacrifice is not always commendable. It must be inspired by love. Even love as it manifests itself in human relationships is not always "an unerring light," nor "joy its own security." Jesus said, "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's the same shall save it,"[5] not simply for his own sake or for the sake of his neighbour.

"For the sake of the Kingdom of God," "for the Gospel's sake," "for My sake"—Jesus asks for Himself

[1] Mark x. 45. [2] Phil. ii. 4. [3] Gal. vi. 2–5.
[4] Rom. xiv. 8. [5] Mark viii. 35.

more than the love of a neighbour. He places devotion to Himself among the absolute duties. For the Christian the conflict between self-love and love of our neighbour finds reconciliation in devotion to someone greater than self and than neighbour. There are many suggestions in the Gospels and Epistles of the way in which this works out. For example, in one large class of cases, the opposition between duties to self and to others is resolved by a leading principle of the Kingdom, that the Christian must be willing to take the position of less esteem in the eyes of the world and even of the Christian community, "in honour preferring one another." [1] Again, another large class of cases is resolved by another principle of the Kingdom, the care to be taken lest we cause "one of these little ones that believe on Me to stumble." [2] Accordingly, the Apostle Paul declares: "Wherefore if meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for ever more, that I make not my brother to stumble." [3] Here the lower claims of self are to be willingly sacrificed to the higher good of another. It is in the light of the higher interests of the Kingdom of God that the Christian must learn to make all his decisions. And they will not be made alone, for the Master is there to direct. The ethics of the Gospel are not autonomous. "For me to live is Christ." [4]

It would be entirely to misunderstand the ethics of the Gospel if we endeavoured to show that Jesus Christ or His Apostles had given us a ready-made answer for every possible situation. The Gospel is not a code of laws, or a commandment contained in ordinances and precepts. All morality by dictation is excluded. The Christian is no longer under law, but under Grace. He is placed upon his honour. [5]

Such common expressions as self-culture, self-development, and self-realisation, sound very strange as applied to Christian morals. "Ye are God's husbandry; God's

[1] Rom. xii. 10; Matt. xviii. 4. [2] Matt. xviii. 6.
[3] 1 Cor. viii. 13. [4] Phil. i. 21; Gal. ii. 20. [5] Rom. vi. 2, 15.

building"[1]: Christians are "new creatures in Christ,"[2] "His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works."[3] The Philippians were exhorted to "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure."[4] Strictly speaking, the Christian's efforts are not directly concerned with himself, but with the purpose and work of God; and the commandments of Jesus are for the understanding and furtherance of that work rather than direct incentives to self-effort. This is specially the case with prayer. Jesus probably said more about this Christian duty than about any other. Both by example and precept He taught His disciples to pray; and when the Apostle Paul enjoins his converts to pray without ceasing, he is simply reproducing the teaching of Jesus Christ.[5] The New Testament is full of evidence as to the supreme importance of prayer. But it is not primarily as a means of self-culture. Prayer is the Divinely-appointed means of coming to the knowledge of God's will and of receiving strength to do it. Its reflex action on self, which looms so largely in some modern books on prayer, is in the New Testament in the background. We may owe it to ourselves to pray, but even in praying for our sanctification and growth in grace, it is well to remember that it is God's will for us, that in all things He may be glorified.[6]

Nor does self-examination receive much emphasis in the New Testament or in the Bible as a whole. Bushnell, in a notable sermon on "Self-examination examined," found only two or three recommendations to it in the New Testament, and those not very decisive.[7] It is God who examines and tries the heart. We are not competent judges of our own motives. Very often we shall judge ourselves too leniently, for the heart is deceitful, and we

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 9.
[2] 2 Cor. v. 17.
[3] Eph. ii. 10.
[4] Phil. ii. 13.
[5] 1 Thess. v. 17; Luke xviii. 1.
[6] 1 Thess. iv. 3; Matt. v. 16.
[7] *Sermons on Living Subjects.*

need to pray: "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults."[1] But sometimes we may be unjust. Morbid introspection or introversion is a real danger to some. The appeal must always be to One who is "greater than our hearts and knoweth all things."[2] The Christian is not a Pythagorean, devoting himself assiduously to self-scrutiny, nor a psycho-analyst, relegating conscience to a subordinate place in favour of blind, subconscious instincts. "He that judgeth me is the Lord."[3]

But, though man's chief end is to glorify God and not to develop himself, Jesus showed in many ways and particularly by that sacrifice of Himself through which He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified, that the perfecting of each was the will of the Father. The training of the disciples was not simply a preparation for work to be done, but an expression of the Father's love for them. He watches with more than parental interest the growth and development of each one of His children.

This training involved among other things the giving of lessons; and Jesus spoke as other teachers had already spoken, and yet with a quite new authority and finality, on such subjects as the regulation of thought and speech, the use and abuse of riches, time, and other talents or opportunities, the claims of Cæsar, the significance and duties of marriage, the duties of forgiveness, prudence, truthfulness, watchfulness, a holy violence, non-resistance of evil, and so on. And all the time He was preparing His disciples for those coming events, which by altering their attitude to God would lift them into a world of clearer vision and infinite resources. The most distinctive things in Christianity only came within their ken, and can only become visible to us also, through the Holy Spirit whom He hath sent.

As the result of the connection of the whole of the moral life with the will of God and with the facts of the

[1] Ps. xix. 12. [2] 1 John iii. 20.
[3] 1 Cor. iv. 4.

Gospel, the Christian character comes to possess its distinctive characteristics. These are (1) its greater depth or inwardness, as shown by the emphasis on thought, desire, and intention; (2) its greater breadth or sympathy, as illustrated specially in the prominence given to the passive virtues as pity, peace, purity, patience, meekness, gentleness, forgiveness; and (3) its more positive and aggressive character. Other types of morality possess one or other of these marks; but it is the contention of the Christian moralist that nowhere else can they be found so fully developed, or so perfectly combined, as in characters moulded by the Gospel.

When Plato wished to describe the character proper to man, he turned to the Greek State, and saw there "the individual writ large." And we might turn to the constitution of the Christian community as given in the Book of the Revelation to discover the ideal Christian character. The character of the individual is a miniature copy of that City. It is symbolised by the perfect cube. The length and breadth and depth of it are equal. Energy, sympathy, and depth or elevation are the three dimensions of the perfect character.

Or with other Greek moralists we might turn to the "wise man," that is for us the perfect man, the man Christ Jesus, for our concrete representation. Deeply lodged in the human heart is the conviction that only man can say what man should be. The φρόνιμος of Aristotle, "the wise man" of the Stoics, the autonomous ethics of Kant, the martyr-hero of J. G. Fichte, confronted by "the image of his fame in after times" and encouraged by "the suffrages of the race" to do the rational thing and die, are sufficient illustrations. The conviction is satisfied by Him who called Himself the Son of Man. The highest thoughts of men in the past and the final verdict of the race, so the Christian believes, are revealed in Him.

Revealed in Him, and made possible for us, according to our faith, through the Gospel of His death and

resurrection. The dignity and elevation of Anselm, the gentleness and sympathy of Francis of Assisi, the courage and untiring energy of Martin Luther, are all the fruit of that Gospel. "Live," said Luther, "as though Christ died yesterday, rose to-day, and were coming to-morrow."

CHAPTER VIII

THE GOSPEL ETHIC IN THE PATRISTIC AGE

IN the last five chapters an attempt has been made to bring out some of the salient features of the Ethics of the Gospel, as contained in the New Testament. It is there presented as a Way of Life very different from anything the world had yet received, or the mind of man was afterwards to evolve. We can find nothing like it in any of the literatures of the world. None of the four main currents of ethical thought in Greece, and none of the four paths by which the Indian mind has tried to express the way of life, presents more than a superficial resemblance. In the Ethics of the Gospel we have a view of the moral universe deeper and more comprehensive than that of Greece or of India. It is characterised by fullness of life, and in it personality first comes to its own.

It was not to be expected that each part of this philosophy of life would have been fully appropriated by all who received it as a heritage from the Apostolic Age. In that creative period under a special illumination of the Holy Spirit men attained to a view of reality too large and too concrete for the average person. The common mind is analytical, splits up the universe into sections, and thinks in particulars. The Apostles saw everything in Christ, interpreting all things in relation to a personality in which the powers of the heavenly world transfigured the earthly, and the Divine and the human became inseparably one. The Kingdom of God with all that it implies of unity and order and power, of grace and truth and fellowship, is the highest conception of the moral universe to which the mind of man has attained.

The subapostolic writers were keenly conscious of their inferiority to the Apostles. Clement of Rome feels that he cannot write with the authority of an Apostle, and refers the Corinthians to the Epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul, which he wrote to them "in the beginning of the Gospel." [1]

Ignatius hoped that, when he had attained to God, he might be found at the feet of Paul.[2] Polycarp said: "Neither I nor any other such as I, can attain to the wisdom of the blessed and glorified Paul." [3]

Within the next generation or two a canon of New Testament books was being formed, which placed certain inspired writings definitely in a class by themselves, thus giving formal recognition to the common judgment of Christian men that these books were unique in value. Many of the subsequent Christian writers were men of force. Some of them had the advantages of the best education that the Roman Empire could provide, and might easily have won a reputation in literature or philosophy equal to that of their contemporaries. As it was, even "the literary hope of the future was surely with men who were not writing to win the applause of fashionable cliques, but because they had a message to deliver." [4] No serious critic, however, would think of putting Justin and Clement and Origen, Minucius Felix, Tertullian and Cyprian in the same class as the Apostolic writers, and certainly they would not have dreamed of doing so themselves. Clement of Alexandria had philosophical tastes and wide acquaintance with Greek literature, but could not find there anything comparable with the "truly royal teaching" of the Scriptures. The teaching of philosophers and poets was in no case supplementary, but only preparatory to the Gospel. The teaching which is according to the Saviour is complete in itself, and Hellenic philosophy does not make the truth more powerful. The varied and unfading Scriptures are the oracles of God,

[1] *Ep.*, ch. 47 and ch. 1.
[2] *Eph.*, 3; *Trallians*, iii.
[3] *Ep.*, 3.
[4] Gwatkin, *Early Church History*, I. 176.

resplendent with the rays of truth. They have omnipotent authority.[1]

The Kingdom of God.

The "truly royal teaching" reminds us that Clement has not forgotten the Apostolic teaching regarding the Kingdom. The ethics of second-century writers were still closely connected with this idea. Despised and rejected by men, they knew what was meant by "the royal law of liberty," and claimed to be living under a free but regal constitution. They belonged to a kingdom greater than that of the Cæsars, and the kingdom belonged to them. The joy and exultation with which they suffered the loss of all things shows how bright a reality the Gospel of the Kingdom was to them. When the highest moral ideals of the Empire, as represented by Marcus Aurelius, were yielding to the pressure of the prevailing pessimism, and the Empire was slowly sinking into despair, the Gospel enabled multitudes to live in gladness and die in triumph. They had received a Kingdom, which could not be shaken. So Dionysius of Alexandria in the next century can still speak of the martyrs in the Decian persecution as "witnesses of the Kingdom."[2]

As in the Apostolic Age so in later times different aspects of the Kingdom were emphasised. Ignatius thought that the end of all things was at hand, and believed that the best way of bridging over the short interval before the Lord's return was to tighten up Church organisation and put Christians under a quasi-military discipline. This was the *interim ethic* which some have wrongly associated with the first age. In the exultancy of hope, which the thought of the coming of their Lord inspired, the Apostles did not overlook the moral development of Christians under the continued teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit. But it was otherwise with some of the succeeding

[1] *Strom.*, 1, 6, 20; *Pædag.* 2. 11; *Strom.* 4. 2.
[2] Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.*, vi. 41.

teachers. Ignatius, though he writes six letters to Christian churches and one to Polycarp, never recognises the work of the Holy Spirit among them, unless in the curious and certainly un-Biblical phrase, "using the Holy Spirit as a rope." And when the Montanists brought into prominence the work of the Holy Spirit, they regarded it, as Ignatius does, in the solitary instance in which he speaks of a message which he had received from the Spirit, as enforcing more rigorous external ordinances. Both in Ignatius and amongst the Montanists we see the natural tendency to externalise the idea of the Kingdom, in the one case by stereotyping the outward organisation, and in the other by adding fastings and other ascetic requirements—a law of commandments contained in ordinances—to the freedom of the spirit.

The Montanists stood also for the more literal and apocalyptic view of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God would descend in visible form at Pepuza. And many, nearer to the main line of development than the Montanists, thought in the same way. Papias tells us that he had received from the elders a doctrine of an earthly millennium, in which the vines would be miraculously fruitful. Justin Martyr believed in an earthly kingdom in which the saints would be blessed with worldly as well as spiritual good. In the second century this view seems to have been very common. In the third century it lingered on, in Montanist circles and elsewhere; but other views of the Kingdom gained powerful advocates. The influence of the school of Alexandria, especially in the case of Origen, was against materialising views of the Kingdom. In the West Victorinus of Petau held that the Kingdom of God was a present reality in the saints, but their glory would be manifested after the resurrection. Cyprian, at Carthage, believed that the City of God had already come, and that the Bishops' Church was the City. In the fourth century the rapid growth of monasticism showed that neither the Montanist heaven nor the Cyprianic Church satisfied men's view of the Kingdom. At the beginning of the fifth century the influence of Augustine made the spiritual reign of Christ

the orthodox doctrine as contrasted with the Apocalyptic; but also, in other ways, prepared the way for the future materialising of the Kingdom in the Holy Roman Empire.

But whatever aspect of the Kingdom, physical or spiritual, mundane or heavenly, present or future, apocalyptic or inward, predominated, its moral character was not overlooked. It meant above all things a new way of life, a new loyalty and obedience. With whatever admixture of worldly motives, and notwithstanding many failures in applying its principles, men were seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, as announced by Jesus. That was the all-important fact. The Kingdom meant more than men could understand, not less. It was a mystery of light, not of darkness. But it remained a mystery, especially to the world. Men must still be born from above before they could see it. The mystical fellowship of the saints was a brotherhood, whose bonds were stronger than those of family, or of race, or of worldly interests. It was above all a Kingdom in which men knew they had been redeemed from this present evil world. It met all the needs which the Mystery religions revealed, and though it would be easy to show how perilously near to heathen ideas of redemption and sacramental magic some of the Church writers ocasionally came, there were also many clear statements of the fundamental teaching of the Gospel. Ignatius, for example, reminds the Ephesians that it was into the "mysteries of the Gospel" that they were initiated with Paul, the Gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Elsewhere the death of our Lord is spoken of as a mystery, which, though wrought in the silence of God, is now noised abroad, and the Resurrection as a mystery by which we have obtained faith. Though Ignatius attached great and apparently magical value to the Sacraments, the great Mystery of Christianity lies even for him in the Gospel itself.[1] For the author or authors of the *Epistle to Diognetus* the Mystery of the Father is the revelation of His wise purpose in sending His Son to die for our sins,

[1] *Eph.*, 12, 19; *Magn.*, 9; *Eph.*, 18, 20.

that He might live again in our hearts, and enable us to enter into the Kingdom of God.[1] Justin Martyr gives us a very full account of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and as we should expect in the case of one who emphasises so clearly the rational, moral, and historical character of Christianity, steers clear of magic. The "illumination" is not the illumination of the Mysteries, but of the teaching of Jesus. It is the work of Christ through the teaching, and not through the water, still less the water itself, that effects the renewal of life. It is not the sacraments, but the death of Jesus Christ that is for Justin the supreme Mystery. No less than six times he uses the word "mystery" of the actual historical events, the sufferings and death of Jesus—"the mystery of the Cross," "the shameful mystery of the Cross," "the blood and mystery of the Cross," "the mystery of Him who was crucified," "the mystery of this salvation (through the sufferings of Christ)," "the mystery of the glory of the Crucified Jesus."[2] Clement is a true Alexandrian in his love of allegory, and very fond also of the symbolism of the Mysteries, so that it is not always easy to know how far we do him an injustice by taking him literally. But just as he sometimes plunges into Neoplatonism, or trespasses on Gnostic territory, so he sometimes appears to cross over to the Sacramentalists. Yet there are more evangelical notes sounded by Clement, especially in his earnest appeal to the Greeks. There, as it has been pointed out, Clement uses the symbolism of the heathen mysteries to illustrate spiritual experiences without any reference to sacraments.[3] The great High Priest leads men to the Father without the mediation of priest or sacrament. The Kingdom is still the Kingdom of the truth, and its actualities are not wholly lost sight of in the gross darkness of a non-moral

[1] *Ep.*, chs. 7, 8 and 11.

[2] 1 *Apol.*, 61, 65, 66; *Dial.*, 138, 131, 134, 74; 1 *Apol.*, 13.

[3] T. R. Glover, *Jesus in the Experience of Men*, p. 36. There is a good summary of the sacramental teaching of Clement in Patrick's *Clement of Alexandria*, p. 124, etc.

mysticism or formal catholicism. As a later Western writer, who, like Clement, was much interested in the Mysteries, says: "This is the secret of God, this is the mystery of the world." [1]

The Authority of Jesus Christ.

Still more clearly and unanimously did the writers of the Church declare the inseparable connection of the new life with Jesus Christ. He was for them the supreme authority in morals. There are indeed a few apparent exceptions. Among the Apologists, Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch and Athenagoras of Athens never mention the name of Jesus Christ, and appear to have no interest in the historic facts of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus, although they discuss theology and magnify the prophets. Minucius Felix also, though he describes the morality of the Christians, does not, in the dialogue that has come down to us, connect it either with the teachings or work of Jesus. But these are exceptions which prove the rule. Writers of different schools, not simply great bishops like Irenæus or Cyprian or Ambrose or Augustine, are explicit enough in acknowledging Jesus Christ as teacher and guide. Justin Martyr and Clement make much use of the idea of the Logos as Teacher, but they do not fail to identify the Logos with Jesus. To Clement, Jesus and not merely the Logos was the Light of the World. Plato and others were illuminated by the dawn of that Light.[2] Justin Martyr says: "Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ." He is the Hierophant of the sacred mysteries through whom the gates of light are thrown open.[3] Tatian, having tried the heathen Mysteries and discovered in them the work of one demon here and another there tempting men to evil, turned to the Scriptures and found in them "a certain hidden treasure" and became an initiate of the

[1] Lactantius, *Div. Instit.*, vii. 6.
[2] *Strom.*, 1, 13.
[3] 2 *Apol.*, 8; 1 *Apol.*, 8, 13, 15, etc.; *Dial.*, 2, 8, 32, 92.

Kingdom of Heaven.[1] The writer of the *Clementine Recognitions* in one of the most beautiful passages in early Christian literature tells how God has veiled the truth with the curtain of His love, but that he who knocks at the gate of the heavenly shrine will be enlightened by the True Prophet. Arnobius says: "We have knowledge of the heavenly mysteries through Christ, by Him alone is there access to the light."[2]

Jesus is also Example as well as Teacher. Clement of Rome refers Christians to the humility of Jesus.[3] Polycarp exhorts them to follow the example of the Lord in truth and meekness and love.[4] "We who desire to be Christians," said Cyprian, "ought to imitate what Christ said and did."[5] Lactantius speaks of Christ as "a living law," and "an example in all the duties of life and in death."[6] Ambrose says that we should imitate Christ, who took upon Himself the form of a servant. We should live our lives according to the example of Christ, avoiding boasting and not courting publicity.[7]

These are a few typical instances of appeals to the example of Jesus by Christians in the first four centuries. They show that imitation was to be in spirit rather than in outward form; in meekness, self-denial, and service, not in self-assertiveness and vain pretensions to be "little Christs." The literal imitation may have attracted men like Tatian the Encratite and Faustus the Manichean, but it does not seem to have played a leading rôle in the first three centuries. It may be that the majority were so conscious of the uniqueness of the Saviour's character and mission that they shrank from the idea of copying. The Apostles were more like the ordinary Christian than Jesus was. They had been rescued from sin by Jesus and ascribed to Him the beginning and perfecting of the new life in them. That was the secret which the Christians

[1] *Apol.*, 29 and 30.
[2] III. 58; II. 65.
[3] *Ep.*, ch. 16.
[4] *Ep.*, ch. 10.
[5] *De Habitu*, 6; *Test.*, 3, 39.
[6] *Div. Instit.*, iv. 25, 26.
[7] *De Officiis*, IV. 3, 15; III. 5, 36.

were most anxious to learn. So they chose to imitate the Apostles, and worship Christ. It would not be surprising, if what Dobschutz has pointed out in the case of Hermas were true over a wider area than the *Shepherd* represents.[1] But whether Jesus Christ or His Apostles was the model, the Christian life was something more than imitation.

Jesus Christ was also the giver of the new life. According to Clement of Rome Christians are called by the will of God in Jesus Christ and justified by faith. They receive their virtues through Him as High Priest and protector.[2] "Jesus Christ," said Ignatius, "is our inseparable life."[3] "Put therefore, ye who are empty and fickle in your faith, the Lord in your hearts, and ye shall know that there is nothing easier or sweeter or more manageable than these commandments," said Hermas.[4] "Having received the forgiveness of sins, and placed our trust in the name of the Lord, we have become new creatures. . . . His statutes and doctrines dwell in us," said *Barnabas*.[5] "The Word forgives our sins and trains us not to sin," said Clement of Alexandria.[6] "He gives the law of innocency after He has conferred health . . . the Christian abides in Christ, and Christ abides in the Christian," so said Cyprian.[7] According to Ambrose, the foundation of the Christian character is Jesus Christ Himself.[8]

It is very specially by His death and resurrection—the cardinal facts of the Apostolic Gospel—that Jesus Christ, according to Patristic writers, has become the giver of life. "Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ," said Clement of Rome, "that having been shed for our salvation has set the grace of repentance before the whole world."[9] Barnabas says that Christians are sanctified through the remission of sins, which is effected by His

[1] *Christian Life in the Primitive Church*, p. 323.
[2] *Ep.*, ch. 58 and 32. [3] *Eph.*, 3. [4] *Mand.* 12, 4.
[5] *Ep.*, ch. 16. [6] *Pædag.*, 1, 3.
[7] *De Habit.*, 1, 6; *De Mort.*, 21; *Ep.*, 59.
[8] *De Officiis*, I. 50, 251. [9] *Ep.*, 7, 12, 21, 26.

blood of sprinkling.[1] "Say no evil," said Justin, "against Him that was crucified and treat not scornfully the stripes wherewith all may be healed."[2] Irenæus frequently speaks of the moral efficacy of the death of Jesus.[3] Clement of Alexandria speaks clearly regarding the authority of the Word as Redeemer, "I regenerated thee, I emancipated, healed, ransomed thee. Follow thou Me. I am He who feeds thee, giving Myself as bread. . . ."[4] Cyprian said that owing to the death and resurrection of Jesus the new life is possible for us.[5] "It is just," said Ambrose, "to serve Christ, who redeemed us."[6]

In these and similar sayings we have at least echoes of Apostolic teaching and in some of them much more. In creeds and sacraments the death and resurrection of Jesus as historical facts were impressed on the memories and imaginations of men. In the reading of the Memoirs and in singing hymns to Christ as God, in catechetical instruction and expositions of Scripture, the duties of the Christian life were insisted on. But there is no early Christian treatise of an ethical character, which deals in a systematic way with the moral implications of the Cross and Resurrection. The *Didache* is in this respect more Jewish than Christian. The *Pædagogos* of Clement of Alexandria comes much nearer, but Clement does not keep as close to the historical facts as the Apostolic teachers. The *De Officiis* of Ambrose, though its Stoical character has been over-emphasised by Ewald and Hatch, hardly does sufficient justice to the essential connection between the Cross and the Christian life. There is much to be said for the dictum of a French writer, M. Denis, that Augustine was the first Christian moralist. A similar claim was made for Cyprian by Monceaux. It is sufficient perhaps, to put on the other side the opinions of Gwatkin and Harnack. The former says that Cyprian borrowed most of his ideas from his heathen surroundings: the latter that a Church which

[1] *Ep.*, ch. 5.
[2] *Dial.*, 137.
[3] *Agst. Heresies*, III. 5, 3, etc.
[4] *Quis Dives*, 23.
[5] *De Mort.*, 21, etc.
[6] *De Officiis*, II. 6, 24.

could be permanently satisfied with Cyprian's doctrines of forgiveness and expiation, on which the moral life rests, "would very soon have lost the last remains of her Christian character." [1]

The Christian Community.

The value of the Christian Society for the development of the moral life, upon which stress was laid in the first age, continued to be recognised very generally in this period. There were indeed from the beginning some who preferred to live alone, the μονάζοντες or solitaries of whom Hermas speaks. These men refused "to cleave to the servants of God," and in consequence "destroyed their souls." [2] But the social aspect of the new life was everywhere in evidence. The Christians remembered that they were fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. There was still, especially before the outward organisation became stereotyped, the consciousness of spiritual unity, "one body and one spirit . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all." But this conception of a heavenly community with a large earthly membership was a difficult one for the natural man to receive and retain, particularly when the natural man happened to be a Roman. Few had a faith in the unseen world like that of the Roman centurion in the Gospels. The invisible hosts seemed less real to most men than the Roman legions, the general assembly and Church of the first-born than a visible community controlled by bishops, priests and deacons, and the invisible Lord than the visible bishops, who sometimes claimed to represent Him. Even the faith of the martyr Church seemed hardly equal to the task of keeping alive the New Testament conception of the Church. It appears comparatively seldom in the literature of the period. We have it in the *Epistle to Diognetus*, and there are hints of

[1] *The Church, Past and Present*, p. 91; *History of Dogma*, 2, 140.
[2] *Simil.*, 9, 26.

it in Clement of Alexandria, in Origen, and elsewhere in various quarters, till at length it is seen lying side by side with the Catholic view in the capacious mind of Augustine. There is hardly any article of the Christian creeds which had less justice done to it by the dogmatists. It was a fact of Christian experience rather than of controversy. Disputes regarding "the Church" were mainly about externalities. These were disastrous enough. But the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, was above the reach of the disputants. Some of them could not even imagine what it meant.

Attention began very soon to be concentrated on externals. It was not enough that Christians should know one another, and be known to the world, as Jesus said, by their mutual love. It was not enough that they should be baptized by the one Spirit into the one Body. That Body must be manifest to the world by external marks, and take its place alongside of other societies, which had a purely mundane origin and aim. Men did not stop to inquire how this could be. In their desire to make their organisations more imposing, or more efficient for the furtherance of the Gospel, they sometimes forgot that the Jerusalem which is above, and which is the mother of us all, is free and refuses to be restricted to this or that organisation. Her children have never been found in one fold. That "Church" is infinitely more than an institution or group of institutions. It is the union of believers in Jesus Christ.

That union of believers in Jesus Christ was to many a very real experience during the growth of the hierarchical forms of government, which threatened to obscure and destroy it. Designed in the first instance to protect the social life of the community, the hierarchy became a powerful means of suppressing initiative and concealing the spiritual character of the Church. The determination to restrict the social life and fellowship of men in Christ to certain rigidly-defined and exclusive channels was met in the second century by the well-meaning but erratic

protest of the Montanists, in the third by the Novatians, and in the fourth by the Donatists. That is always the effect of laying undue stress on organisation among people who are becoming acquainted with the freer ideas and spirit of the Gospel. The Catholics made a fatal mistake in not meeting the Montanists more sympathetically. It was comparatively easy to quench the spirit and despise prophesyings. It was not so easy to show them the more excellent way. To construct a rigid organisation was much easier than to recover the Apostolic teaching regarding the work of the Holy Spirit, and the Catholics chose the easier way. When the word had gone forth that only within an external organisation officered by bishops, priests and deacons, with a uniform rule of faith, and an exclusive claim to the charismata of the Holy Ghost could salvation be found, the great betrayal of the Christian brotherhood had taken place. Tertullian, who was at first a staunch Catholic defending the rigorous ecclesiastical system, came afterwards to see the wrong that had been done—"Are not we laymen priests?"—and turned Montanist. When Cyprian in the third century still further transformed the New Testament ideas of the Church and Ministry and Sacraments, he provoked the opposition of those who valued the liberty of the Christian man. The Novatians may in some ways have been less liberal than Cyprian, but they very naturally resented the arrogance of the clergy and any further secularising of the idea of the Church. The Donatist protest in the fourth century was a still more serious consequence of tampering with New Testament ideas and principles. That conflict lasted for a hundred years, and before it was suppressed by force the sense of Christian fellowship was almost lost. Christians had been so busy defending the external symbols of their Faith and striving to secure outward uniformity, that they had forgotten to love one another. What Christian fellowship remained was found chiefly in the monasteries. "The Church" had failed to become the home of brethren in Christ.

But the Gospel remained, and Jesus Christ was still with those who met in His name. Bishops might cut themselves off from communion with bishops whom they regarded as either heretical or schismatical. They might turn the means of Grace into a barrier between God and man, between Christian and Christian; but the fellowship could never be dissolved, while the Gospel was preached, and the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. Testimonies to the power of that love meet us continually, not only in descriptions which Christian Apologists like Aristides give us of Christian morality, but in the ridicule of a heathen writer like Lucian. The love of Christians to one another, at least in the second and third centuries, was recognised as a new thing in the world. Its symbol was the holy Supper of the Lord, until that was transformed into a sacerdotal rite. And it is noteworthy that Cyprian, one of the main agents in effecting the change, has much to say about obedience to ecclesiastical authority, but little about the fellowship of Christians in the Lord: much to say about discipline, but very little about love:[1] much about alms-giving and works of charity as a satisfaction for sin, but little about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the foundation of the new society and the bond of brotherhood. We can see which way things were tending.

The Christian's Relation to the World.

It is not easy to sum up in a few sentences the success and failure of the early Christians in appropriating the New Testament teaching regarding the world. What we need especially to bear in mind is the almost insuperable difficulties which the Gospel had to overcome. The Eastern doctrine of the evil of matter was widespread. It was fashionable to despise the world. Abuse of the good things

[1] This does not of course mean that such words as "brethren" and "love" are not common in Cyprian's writings. It means that they were coming to be understood in a clerical and non-Apostolic way.

of life had created disgust. Extremes of wealth and poverty had produced their usual results, satiety and apathy. As time went on, the Roman Empire began to prove unequal to its tasks of governing the world and promoting the happiness of its subjects. Crushing taxation was added to the other miseries of life. Few men were able or had the heart to engage in public duties. What were the Christians to do ? They could not, if they would, have prevented the bankruptcy of the Empire. They could not save the world from the consequences of its sin and folly. But they did something to mitigate the evil and keep hope and joy alive.

They witnessed, as the Apostolic preachers had done, to the goodness of the world as created by God. Malign spirits were at work in the world, but they had not been busy at its creation. The material world was good. "The Creator and Lord of all," said Clement of Rome, "Himself rejoices in His works." "Having prepared His bountiful Gifts for us, He placed us in the world, and we ought to thank Him for all His gifts." At the Eucharistic service thanksgiving was offered for temporal as well as spiritual gifts, for our Lord had taken a body from this creation. Irenæus asserted both against the licentiousness of some of the Gnostic sects and the asceticism of others the Christian's duty of using and not abusing the world. Clement of Alexandria pleads for a temperate use of wealth. Tertullian, in spite of the strong ascetic strain in him, says that the universe is good and given to man as a free gift. Even in the fourth century, when monasticism was rife throughout the Empire, there were a few protesting voices, as those of Jovinian, Vigilantius and Helvidius. Theodore, though he recovered from his "fall" and at the entreaty of his friends gave up Hermione, afterwards showed his sympathy with the clergy who had less ascetic views on marriage. Ambrose, though he shared the prevailing spirit, was saved from the excesses of some of the wilder advocates of renunciation by his belief that in Jesus Christ the world had risen again. Often we can see the two tendencies, to

enjoy and to renounce the world, struggling for the mastery, or appearing in different forms in the same man. It was as Hermas was magnifying the creatures of God and thinking how powerful and beautiful they were, that the humbling visions came to him. Basil the Great had a delight in the beauties of nature, but his asceticism appears in an exaggerated estimate of the merits of fasting. Christians were, no doubt, too much influenced by the views and sentiments of the heathen around them. But they were not wholly faithless to the teaching of the Master. Their undue disparagement of worldly good had often a worthy motive behind it. There are occasions when abstinence from what is lawful becomes the Christian's duty, and such times must have been frequent in those dark days.

And to the world of sinful men the Christians witnessed by word and deed to the Grace of Jesus Christ. The "insatiable desire for doing good," of which Clement of Rome speaks, was due to the realisation of the Divine forgiveness. Men who were willing to sell themselves into slavery, that they might preach the Gospel; or who ministered to the plague-stricken heathen at Carthage, when they had been deserted by their friends; or who, ridiculed and tortured in life and death, prayed for those who despitefully used them, revealed a secret of power which belonged only to the followers of the Crucified. They were in the world, but not of it. They loved the world, though not its spirit. As the soul is in the body, said the *Epistle to Diognetus*, so were Christians in the world, everywhere diffused and giving life to it, hated by the world but loving it in return.

Nor did they keep wholly aloof from public duties. As a despised and persecuted people they were often shut out from positions of honour and responsibility. The heathen ceremonies and practices associated with social and political life also prevented them from taking the part they otherwise might have done. They were not, Tertullian protests, Indian Brahmins and Gymnosophists living remote from men, but associating with, working with, and fighting

alongside of, the heathen. Augustine could challenge the heathen to produce not only parents, husbands, sons, masters and servants, equal to those which Christianity had formed, but also military men, provincials, kings, judges, and administrators.[1] Though they were citizens of a heavenly world, they did their work in this, and it was largely due to the Christians and the Jews that the industrial and economic life of the Empire was maintained.

When they had opportunities, prominent Churchmen, like Martin of Tours and Ambrose and Synesius, resisted the oppression of the strong. Gregory of Nazianzum protested against the harsh demands of tax-gatherers, the injustice of the law courts, and the unfairness of Roman law in its treatment of women.

In monastic communities manual labour was often honoured both in the East and West. The isolation of the monks from the world was far from complete. The monasteries were centres of charity. In his monastic community at Neo-Cæsarea, Basil established a hospital for the sick, and an inn for travellers and a home for children. Men were not simply helped by gifts, but taught a trade. Christians became known for their beneficence. The Ethics of the Gospel meant the service of men.

The Gospel and Self-Culture.

One part of the moral teaching of Jesus, the value of the individual, was very fully appropriated by the early Christians. Life acquired a new sacredness. The ordinance of infant-baptism was the symbol of this great change. The condemnation of infanticide was another proof. Everywhere, where the Gospel was preached, there sprang up a new regard for the individual's welfare, and in particular for the rights of the weaker. The Roman poet, Terence, could make one of his characters, the man who professed: "Nothing that is human is alien to me,"

[1] See *Christ and Civilisation*, by A. E. Garvie and others; and Schmidt's *Social Results of Early Christianity* for fuller treatment.

upbraid his wife for not having killed her infant with her own hand.[1] Epictetus, whose moral treatise seems in some quarters to be a favourite Christmas present, "speaks of women with the most acrid contempt and children he dismisses as snivelling brats."[2] But it was by the Advent of Jesus that woman came first to her true place of honour, and the child ceased to be despised. "It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."[3]

But character is more than life, and it was to save men from sin and not simply from death, that Jesus came. "Better not be than not be noble." The Gospel gave to men a new conception of manhood—"the full-grown man, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." That was the end at which together with all the saints the Christian was to arrive. And the way was the way of the Cross. "He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

During the times of persecution the losing of life for Christ's sake was a daily occurrence. But something more than the surrender of physical life was involved in the statement of Jesus. It was a philosophy of life, rather than an incentive to martyrdom. Self-culture, as we saw, was not salvation in the Christian sense. This has always been a difficult lesson for the natural man to learn, and it is little wonder if some of the greatest teachers of the Church have sometimes been found wanting. Justification by faith, the doctrine which shattered the self-regarding character of morals, had a hard fight to win recognition and worthy statement. It was the practical creed of many, no doubt, though the theologians failed often to give adequate expression to it. Comparatively few seem to have heartily accepted the Pauline statement of it. Clement of Rome employs the phrase, but elsewhere uses words which are not consistent with it.[4] Hermas still more plainly

[1] *Heauton*, I. 1, 25; III, 4, 17. Other instances in Croslegh's *Christianity Judged by its Fruits*, p. 31.

[2] *The Church's Task in the Roman Empire*, by Bigg, p. 7.

[3] Matt. xviii. 14.

[4] *Ep.*, chs. 32, 12, 50.

shows the spirit of the Roman Church. The Gospel is a new law revealing sin, rather than providing a way of justification in the presence of a holy God. He speaks of a man giving a propitiation for his sin, and doing something beyond what was commanded.[1] Ignatius writes as a disciple of the Apostle Paul, and attacks the Judaisers of his time. But he is more in sympathy with the Apostolic doctrine of union with Christ than that of justification by faith. The Cross is for Ignatius the goal rather than the starting-point of Christian discipleship. Other elements also enter in which are difficult to reconcile with a clear grasp of this doctrine. And the same might be said with greater assurance regarding many other writers, even regarding those who make it quite clear that the Christian life depends on the death and resurrection of Jesus. As we proceed, the conception of Christianity as a new law of commandments contained in ordinances gains more and more upon the Gospel idea of the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. We see this not only in writers like Commodianus, who brings everything under the ruling concept of law, but in Irenæus, in whose writings the legal and the evangelical are more equally blended.

With the submergence of the doctrine of justification by faith went much that was characteristic of the Ethics of the Gospel. The centre of gravity in morals was being slowly changed. The cleansing of the conscience from dead works was sought elsewhere than in the blood of Jesus Christ. Self-control, self-culture, ἄσκησις, usurps the place of faith, with the result that the character of Christians tends frequently to become more Stoical than Christian.

But it did not become wholly so. The rapid process of deterioration, the undue emphasis on the freedom of the will, and the throwing into the background of the work of Divine Grace in the formation of the Christian character, were arrested by the more Pauline teaching of Augustine. The recovery was not complete. The moralising of the

[1] *Vis.*. 1, 2; *Simil.*, 5, 3.

idea of Divine Grace remained imperfect. But a step forward had been taken towards a fuller understanding of the Ethics of the Gospel. Augustine was both a preacher of Grace and "the prophet of personality." If the latter makes him "the first modern man," the former connects him with the Apostolic age. He is the best link between the two.[1]

[1] Bevan, *Hellenism and Christianity*, p. 140, calls him "the prophet of personality." "The first modern man" is Harnack's description. In Augustine we see the Christian idea of God as Person, contending against the Manichæan idea of God as Substance, with its necessary consequences in ethics. "The real difference between Christian and Manichee ethics can be expressed in a single sentence. Christianity is concerned with persons; Manichæism with things." (F. C. Burkitt, *The Religion of the Manichees*, p. 60.)

By its doctrines of Transubstantiation and Sacramental Grace the Roman Church showed its preference for the Manichæan point of view. Luther's doctrine of Consubstantiation, a relic of the old way of thinking, was not an integral part of Reformation theology, as events proved.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAPSE INTO LEGALISM

A THOUSAND years intervened, however, before "the prophet of personality" found the interpreter and the audience which his message deserved. And this was not very strange; for the prophet was divided against himself. Augustine the ecclesiastic and dogmatist, the hero of the Donatist controversy and the advocate of force for the suppression of schism, was a very different person from Augustine the seer, finding in the depths of his experience of Divine Grace the key which opened the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. The former was intelligible to the many: the latter only to the few. So it was the Catholic and legal elements in his system that were first appropriated, and became the framework, if not the foundation, of Mediæval thought and practice. In this way Christianity received a new and alien form, one incompatible with its essential character, as revealed in the New Testament. A law of commandments contained in ordinances was substituted for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Canon law tended more and more to take the place of the Gospel as a determinant of Christian conduct. The freedom of the Christian man was denied by the vast hierarchical and sacerdotal organisation, which claimed to control every man's thought and life in this world and determine his destiny beyond. Personality had little opportunity of coming to its own.

This transformation of the Ethics of the Gospel into the Ethics of Catholicism was not completed all at once by Gregory at the beginning of the Mediæval period, nor was it equally effective in every time and place. But it was

very real. The whole conception of the Christian life was changed. It was not a question of a little more emphasis upon one Christian duty and a little less upon another. It was not that one aspect of Christian character was thrown into the background and another brought to the front. It was not a case merely of adaptation of outward forms to new surroundings, or of enlarging or contracting the sphere in which the principles of Christian morality were to find application. It was a radical change in the conception of the Christian life itself, a failure to grasp the real significance of Christian morals as set forth in the Apostolic age. And when at the end of the period Martin Luther arose to vindicate the claims of human personality and the freedom of the Christian man, he was confronted in an aggravated form by the misrepresentations of Christian doctrine and practice, which the Apostle Paul attacked in Galatia and at Colosse and at Rome. The battles of the Apostolic age had to be fought over again.

In considering the Mediæval age it is above all things necessary to keep in mind the inevitable conflict between the genius and spirit of the Gospel and the outward institution whose duty it was to proclaim and guard it. That great organisation was not the product merely of Christian influences, but also of the ideas and spirit of Imperial Rome. And Rome in politics, religion, and morals stood for something fundamentally different from the teaching of Jesus and His Apostles. From the beginning the Gospel had been entrusted to frail and erring men, so that even an Apostle confessed, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels";[1] but the crowning miracle of the Mediæval age is that the Gospel survived, not simply in spite of human frailty and sin, but in spite of the fact that the institution that guarded it was constructed according to a secular model, and permeated by heathen ideas. That vessel was broken in pieces at the Reformation, and other vessels were chosen to receive the Gospel. The Ethics of Roman Catholicism have been repudiated by those who

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 7.

regard the New Testament as a sufficient guide for the conduct of life. But the Gospel still lives. Can the Roman Church ever officially return to the Ethics of the Gospel, or will its claim to infallibility prevent it ?

But it is the influence of the Mediæval ecclesiastical system in revealing or obscuring the Ethics of the Gospel, that we are concerned with in this chapter.

The Middle Ages are generally spoken of as the dark ages, or, as though it were synonymous, the ages of faith : and it is the habit of some of us to belittle or ignore them, partly because we have not taken much trouble to study them. When we want an opprobrious term to confound an opponent and glorify our own more enlightened views, we call his opinions Mediæval. But ignorance often has resort to epithets which more sympathetic study would do something to qualify. Many of us, no doubt, might turn with great advantage to a recent work, the *Mediæval Contributions to Modern Civilisation*, especially to an essay in which Professor Hearnshaw endeavours to strike a happy mean between the " glacial theory of the Dean of St Paul's and the fantastic over-glorification of the Middle Ages by Messrs G. K. Chesterton, H. Belloc and A. J. Penty."

The Middle Ages were not ages of unmitigated Egyptian darkness, nor ages of complete stagnation in the realms of thought or action. There were great movements in those days, great thinkers, great workers, and great saints. The ideal of sainthood is not ours. It was not, I venture to think, the Apostolic ideal. But none of us can fail to see that many Mediæval Christians took their religion very seriously and unselfishly, and strove with much sincerity to live what they regarded as the Christian life. We recognise in Francis of Assisi and many another a whole-hearted attempt not only outwardly to imitate the life of Jesus Christ, but also to enter into His spirit of joyous self-surrender, and by so doing make some return to Him who loved them and gave Himself for them. Poverty was not as Francis called it, " the pearl evangelical," nor

was chastity, as understood by many, nor obedience in all things to a fellow-mortal. But the motive which prompted the poverty, the chastity, and even the obedience might be unselfish. When Bonaventura tells us that the sacrificial life of Francis was prompted by the desire "to pay back somewhat unto Christ, who died for us, and to stir up others to the love of God,"[1] he is expressing what both the saint and his biographer regarded as true Christian living. We hear there the evangelical note, though in the midst of much that seems discordant with it. The Pope did not treat Francis too well during his life, and the saint's submission was perhaps in the eyes of Rome his greatest virtue; but the Church that canonised Francis had not lost all sense of moral values.

Nor was the Church of the Middle Ages unpractical. In one sense she was much too practical. It might have been better for Christianity if the Church had kept more aloof from the practical life of the world. She meddled with it too much. She could never be quite sure what was her mission in the world. As one of our Church historians has said, "She followed four distinct aims," which could not well be harmonised: "She sought to bear witness to the world, to flee from the world, to govern the world, and to make money out of the world."[2] And there may have been times when she seemed more intent upon the two latter than the former. Those of us who think that the true aim of the Churches is to bear witness to the world, and not to dominate it, at least by using its own weapons, find the Middle Ages much too practical, and regret that in this respect the Reformers did not emancipate themselves more completely from the traditions of the past. The last thing that can be laid to the charge of the Mediæval Church is that she was other-worldly. In spite of her mystics and saints and recluses, she was terribly mundane. The Middle Ages were not ages of faith in the New Testament sense, but of sight. They were the palmiest

[1] *Life of St Francis* (Everyman Library, cap. ix. par. 5).
[2] Gwatkin, *Knowledge of God*, II. 195.

days of institutional religion, but not of spiritual Christianity.

In the realm of thought there were also periods of considerable activity. There were a few bold thinkers, and many diligent writers. In the earlier period, for example, Erigena, Anselm and Abelard : in the later, after the effect of the Aristotelian revival had been more fully felt, Albert the Great, Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and, among the mystics, Eckhardt. The schoolmen were not the fools of popular fancy, always discussing how many angels could dance on the point of a needle. They grappled with great questions, and believed that if they would worship God rightly, they must think of Him correctly. It might be better if we had a little more of their respect for the human intellect. In these anti-rational days, when so many of the currents of life run into the dead sea of a Christless mysticism, we need the reminder that man is a rational being, and not the mere slave of impulse or of blind, unconscious force.

It is true that there is another and a darker side to all this intellectual activity. Individual thinkers might be moved solely by the love of truth, just as individual saints were by their sense of personal indebtedness to Christ. But the Church as an organisation had its own interests to consider. Organisations are never as keenly sensitive on points of honour and of truth as individuals are. And the Latin Church has been no exception to the rule. It is rarely that a good man is so afflicted with the disease of megalomania that he regards himself as necessary to the well-being of the community, or race ; and so the temptation to subordinate everything to self-interest or the instinct of self-preservation is not reinforced by altruistic motives. But in the case of a society like the Roman Church, existing as it was believed for the highest interests of mankind and with a commission which went back to the Founder of Christianity, the sense of its own importance was apt to override all other considerations, even that of truth. It felt itself so necessary to the spiritual interests of mankind, that its own existence, by an easy transition, became its

prime concern. If the conclusions of earnest thinkers seemed in any way inimical to the authority and stability of the ecclesiastical order, those thinkers must be silenced. Only so far might they go, no further. Human nature being what it is, it must have been fairly easy for popes and prelates to persuade themselves that the safety of an indispensable institution ought to take precedence of everything else, and justify even the false Decretals.

One thing must, however, always stand to the credit of the Roman Church. If she sometimes betrayed the truth and forgot, as Tertullian said, that Christ called Himself Truth, not Custom, she believed that somehow truth was one. She did not insult the intellect of man by presenting it with an abstract scheme of the universe and calling that Reality. She stood for the unity of all knowledge, the subordination of all realms of thought and life to the idea and will of God. Superior persons may be disposed to smile at the view expressed by Vincent of Beauvais in the thirteenth century, that natural science treats of the invisible causes of visible things. But such men as he had grasped the idea which, after four hundred years of free speculation and inquiry, is beginning to force itself upon the modern scientific world, that "Nature," with God left out, is a mere abstraction.

In trying to think things together and to connect morality with the largest universe of thought, the Mediæval thinkers were in the true line of succession, not simply of the Hebrew prophets and Christian Apostles, but of the Greek philosophers. It is we in these modern times who have departed from the philosophical as well as religious way of regarding morals. "To live a good life was not to Plato and Aristotle," says Professor Muirhead, "to be simply a good citizen: it also expressed the true nature and purpose of the world in general, and thus united the human and the Divine. To Plato the highest form of human life could only be the outcome of a vision of the Eternal Good; to Aristotle (herein out-Platoning Plato) it was itself that vision—a putting aside of our mortality

that we may ourselves live in the Eternal." . . . "Plotinus distinguished between the earthly and the heavenly form of the virtues . . . and sought the ultimate justification of moral goodness in an order which, while it includes humanity, is more than human."[1] Something similar might also be said regarding the Stoics. Though they laid great stress on the individual will, they did not isolate man from the larger whole to which he properly belongs. The moral universe was a community of gods and men. Ethics was not divorced from theology. They anticipated the Mediæval Church in trying to include all beings and all things in one great synthesis; and like the Mediæval Church their interest was practical rather than theoretical. That which distinguishes the modern method from both the Ancient and Mediæval is its analytical character. Things have been separated which ought never to have been regarded as existing apart. In pleading, therefore, for a more theological and concrete ethic, we are in line not simply with the Mediæval Church, but also with the great masters of ancient philosophy. Ethics should not be divorced from the larger whole to which it properly belongs. It may have been well that the attempt should have been made to construct an independent ethic. But now that it has failed, as I hope to show later, it is for Christian thinkers and teachers to be more insistent than ever in pressing home the reasonableness and practicality of an ethic distinctively Christian.

We should speak ill-advisedly, if we brought a general accusation against the Mediæval Church for its contempt of heathen learning. Cyprian and Jerome, who in earlier times abandoned Virgil and Cicero in obedience to what they thought to be the will of God, and Lactantius, who speaks of philosophy as "a vice,"[2] had many successors in the Middle Ages. But the Church, especially in the later period, did not despise the legacy of Greece and Rome. She appropriated it, and utilised it. She did not

[1] *D.R.E.*, Vol. V. p. 416, cp. J. Burnet in *The Legacy of Greece*, p. 94.
[2] *Div. Inst.*, vi. 4.

despise or neglect it. Almost as truly might one accuse the Apostolic Churches of neglecting the Old Testament as Western writers of neglecting the philosophers. They did not indeed make their books canonical, but nevertheless they appropriated many of the treasures they contained. They tried to discover points of contact between the Christian Revelation and the wisdom of the ancients. The idea of dogma seems to have been borrowed from Plato, and many other things, including the medicinal lie, erotic mysticism, and Tartarus. On what seemed to him the lower level of moral philosophy, Thomas Aquinas thought there was substantial agreement between Christianity and Greek philosophy, and he makes large use of Aristotle and other heathen writers for purposes of demonstration as well as illustration. Dante held that the light of reason was sufficient for this life,[1] and carefully abstained from saying anything that might be offensive to his companion Virgil, when they visited hell together.

We should also do wrong if we forgot that many within the ecclesiastical system were not subservient to the central authority. The power of the papacy was never quite absolute, apart from the restraints of civil authorities; and never could be, while the word of the Gospel sounded in the ears of any. Claudius of Turin in the ninth century opposed the decision of the Church in respect to the worship of images, and asserted that the pope was not the successor of the Apostle Peter. In the eleventh century Berengarius attacked the doctrine of Transubstantiation as contrary to reason and Scripture; Cunibert of Turin gave his clergy permission to marry; and Damiani told one pope that he ought not to fight, and another, the great Hildebrand, that he had no right to usurp the civil authority. In the twelfth century, when Waldo and his friends were commanded not to preach without permission, they replied in the language of Peter and John: "We must obey God rather than

[1] *De Monarchia*, III. 16. Reade, *The Moral System of Dante's Inferno*, pp. 85, 368, etc.

man." In the thirteenth century Roger Bacon suffered imprisonment for his defence of free inquiry, as against undue subservience to authority; and very near to the year in which he composed his *Opus Majus*, two other advocates of human freedom, Dante and Marsiglio, were born—three names of which any century might be proud. Dante denied the right of the Church to temporal authority; and showed his moral earnestness, among other ways, by putting four popes into hell and two into purgatory. Marsiglio not only denied the temporal authority of the popes, but held that the supreme spiritual authority ought to reside in a General Council. He denied also the sacerdotal claims of the clergy, and made the Church to consist "in the entire body of Christian men." Errors of opinion were not to be punished either by civil or ecclesiastical courts: and in the State the supreme authority was vested in the people. In the fourteenth century Wycliffe boldly declared that the pope was anti-Christ; opposed the celibacy of the clergy, absolution and indulgences, called upon the State to reassert its proper functions; and desired that Scripture, natural law, and the law of conscience should take the place of Canon law. William of Ockham, another famous Englishman, besides denying the temporal power of the pope, declared that he was not the vicar of the Risen Christ, but only the representative of Jesus in His humiliation and service. In the fifteenth century Raymond de Sabunde regarded Scripture and nature as the sole authorities for a Christian man. John of Goch sought to revive the Augustinian doctrine of Grace. John of Wessel said: "I scorn the pope, the Church, and Councils and I extol Christ: let His word dwell in us richly." This is a goodly and fairly continuous list; and no mention has been made of Hus, or Jerome of Prague, or many others.

In other ways the Middle Ages were times of life and movement. In fact they may be said to constitute the golden age of conflict and competition. Kingdom was arrayed against kingdom: Christians against Jews and

Mohammedans, kings against nobles, and nobles against one another: Church against State and State against Church: secular orders of clergy against the monastic:[1] inferior clergy against superior clergy. Liberty was partly kept alive by the clash of rival organisations.

So the Middle Ages were not altogether dark, nor somnolent, nor other-worldly, nor even quite subservient to ecclesiastical authority. Systems of theology of varied kinds were created, vast organisations consolidated, laws codified, and policies given to the nations of Europe. But the time came when the work of the Church in these respects reached a limit; and then at no great interval criticism began to be directed upon the finished constructions. The theology was questioned. The wonderful and imposing organisations did not work quite smoothly. Canon law, so laboriously framed, was felt to be irksome, and above all, the new nations that had been put upon their feet, felt within them the stirrings of a new life, and began to assert their independence. So the way was prepared for the Renaissance and the Reformation. And now for four hundred years men have been overhauling the work of the Middle Ages; and it cannot be said that they have put anything into the place of that vast organisation of thought and life which they have been criticising. Possibly the majority have decided that nothing shall be put into its place: that the time for such kind of unity has gone for ever.

In calling to mind some of the non-Apostolic features of Mediæval ethics it is well also to remember that no external organisation can make a Christian life impossible. "Even in a palace," said Marcus Aurelius, "life may be well lived." We read in the New Testament that there were "saints in Cæsar's household." The institution of slavery, hostile as it was to the moral welfare of masters and slaves, was not absolutely fatal to Christian living. Many

[1] Especially in the West. Allen, *Christian Institutions*, p. 145, refers to the fact that all Eastern bishops had a monastic education, and so there was not the rivalry that proved valuable in the West.

a Christian slave was a freeman in Christ. An ecclesiastical organisation may be very far from Christian, and yet not make the Christian life impossible within its borders. It only becomes impossible when that organisation comes in between the Christian's conscience and that Master to whom each one stands or falls. After the Lateran Council of 1215 A.D., which made auricular confession to a priest compulsory, Christian morals became impossible. Religion cannot be forced. Whenever direction passes into control Christian conduct becomes impossible in theory and precarious in practice. "What the Church of Rome in its official capacity," says Hermann, "calls morality is the death of the moral sense." [1] "Rome," says Loofs, "remains the mother of obedient children, but to religious and moral independence she cannot educate them. Where moral independence exists, it has come to pass not through the Church's training, but in spite of it." [2]

The Kingdom of God became more and more identified in men's minds with a visible institution, and almost ceased to be the Kingdom of the Father. The laws of the Kingdom were external ordinances, and its mysteries *disciplina arcani*, which only a sacerdotal order could dispense. Christian brotherhood became either an affair of nature or an ecclesiastical privilege. The moral redemption of the Cross was thought to be expressed and conveyed by impersonal emblems and non-moral acts. The actual presence of Jesus Christ in the power of His Divinely-human personality was obscured. Men were again subjected to the reign of law; and even the Penitential system of the Middle Ages tended to become a denial of the Grace of Jesus Christ.

Liberally-minded Protestants sometimes try to find an alleviation of the wrong done to the Christian conscience by the tyranny of the priesthood in the devotion of the priesthood to the Mass, which at least kept before

[1] *Faith and Morals*, p. 115.

[2] *Symbolik*, I. 387, quoted by Oman, *The Church and the Divine Order*, p. 149.

the eyes of men the Passion of the Cross. It is as though the priests restored with one hand what they had taken away with the other. They denied to men Christian freedom, but they showed by the exaltation of Jesus Christ in the Mass, where that liberty was to be found. But was this the object of the sacerdotal spirit, which turned the Lord's Supper into the Mass? And was this the effect of the change? That the proclamation of Christ crucified even in its altered form may sometimes have had a salutary influence on Christian morals, no one would wish to deny. It kept alive the memory of a Great Redemption, and may sometimes have suggested the possibility of a new life in the spirit. It also set prominently before a rough and selfish world the ideal of gentleness and self-sacrifice. But there is much to be set on the other side. The sacerdotal ideal of the Lord's Supper materialised the idea of redemption and demoralised the idea of grace. It exalted the office of the priest and belittled the influence of Christ's personality upon the heart and conscience of the believer. It may have increased the emotional power, but it depressed the moral value of the simple Supper. It shifted the emphasis in religion from morals to ritual, and substituted the mystery of the Sacraments for the mystery of the Kingdom.

There are many considerations which throw doubt upon the moral effect of the Mass, both upon the officiating priests and the witnessing worshippers. The most convincing evidence of the value of a rite will always be the characters of those influenced by it. And here judgments will differ according to the extent and accuracy of our knowledge of men and of history. It is very difficult also to isolate one cause of a low morality in Catholic countries and among a Catholic priesthood from other causes; just as also it would be in the case of Protestants and Protestant countries. The falsehood, and intolerance, and other vices found in close, and sometimes official, connection with the service of the Mass, are hard to reconcile with the

Real Presence. But there are evidences of another kind. There is the fact, for example, which has often been noticed, and which Michelet stated in an emphatic way, when he said, "*Le moyen-âge a entièrement méprisé Dieu le Père.*" Dr Coulton, whose wide knowledge of mediæval literature will not be denied, says: "The epigram does not contain much more exaggeration than is inherent in its brevity."[1] The writings of such conspicuous saints as Anselm, Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis of Assisi, and Thomas à Kempis, bear out the substantial truth of the saying. Even they do not seem to have fully appropriated the Apostolic doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, though in some cases constant use of the Bible led them a long way towards the practical recognition of it. The voice of the Holy Spirit crying, "Abba, Father," seldom finds expression in the literature of the period.

The Rule of the great Benedictine Order applies the Apostle's saying with regard to the spirit of adoption not to God the Father, but to the Abbot of the Monastery.[2] Could the Mass have been fulfilling the purpose Jesus intended His Gospel to fulfil, if it did not foster the spirit of sonship? There seems, indeed, to have been little power in any part of the ecclesiastical system of the Middle Ages to encourage that spirit of filial dependence, which Jesus and His Apostles placed at the roots of the Christian character.

Another fact which makes us suspect that the Mass was not fulfilling the true purpose of the Lord's Supper is the rise of Mariolatry. Why, if the real presence of Christ were apprehended in the Mass, should men have felt the need of Mary either to make Him more real or to act as an intermediary? Can we resist the conclusion that the humanity of Jesus Christ was not sufficiently revealed in the Mass? "Matter cannot," said Malebranche, "through the modifications of which it is capable, express exactly the inner disposition of the saintly soul of Jesus, His charity,

[1] *Five Centuries of Religion*, p. 137.
[2] Coulton, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

His humility, His patience. But it can very well imitate the different forms which His adorable body assumes." [1] The presence of "the adorable body" is not all that the soul needs in the Real Presence. Even the adoration of the body seemed to make Jesus less real. It withdrew the thoughts of men from the more moral and human attributes of Jesus, and also emphasised the essential difference of Jesus physically.

And do we not get the impression again and again as we read the records that to many Mary must have been more real and more human than Jesus? Francis of Assisi put Jesus before the Virgin, but did they all? "In her, after Christ," said the biographer of Francis, "he put his chief trust." [2] But would Francis have thought of her in that way, or his biographer have so written, if the uniqueness and sufficiency of the Grace of Jesus Christ had been realised through the Mass? "He loved with an unspeakable affection the Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ, forasmuch as she had made the Lord of Glory our Brother, and that through her we have obtained mercy." [2] The brotherhood that is moral and spiritual is confused, as so often in Francis of Assisi, with the physical and psychical. Jesus is our Brother, but so are the birds and the fishes and the sun. We are in a different world from that of the New Testament with its ethical conception of the Kingdom of God. Jesus delighted in the lilies of the field as illustrations of the loving providence and perhaps of the beauty of His Heavenly Father, but we cannot imagine Him calling them His brothers and sisters. In this respect the ethics of Francis are the ethics of pantheism not of the Gospel.

If we turn from the most important rite of the Mediæval Church to its most religious institution, there is the same difficulty of harmonising it with the Ethics of the Gospel. The "religious" life was the monastic life. The monk was "the religious." But was he the typical Christian, a product of the Gospel? The institution did not come

[1] *Entretiens sur la Metaphysique*, xi.; Ginsberg, p. 295.
[2] *Life of St Francis*, cap. ix.

from the New Testament, and it was not firmly rooted in the Church for three hundred years. This being so, it is likely enough that it is, in the main, an introduction from without, either by way of contagion or of deliberate adaptation. There were monks of Serapis and other deities before there were monks of Christ. The influence of Eastern ascetic practices upon post-Apostolic Christianity can no more be doubted than the influence of Greek thought or Roman law. But that does not at once settle the question of the Christian or non-Christian character of the institution, except for those who regard all later additions as non-Christian. We may then test it by reference to the Gospel or by reference to its fruits.

Monasticism was, I think, rarely if ever definitely based on the Gospel. It was supported rather by a New Testament precept or example, particularly that of our Lord Himself. The saying of Jesus to the young ruler must have seemed sufficient sanction for many besides Anthony; and as we have seen, the "poor life" of Jesus influenced some. Dr Coulton has said that monasticism was "the inevitable logical outcome of one conception of Christ's message."[1] It must often have seemed so. And I think we may add that a fuller conception of His message would have been fatal to nearly every form which the monastic idea has taken. For monasticism, even in its most social and beneficent forms, has always meant a withdrawal from the world, such as received no sanction in the teaching of Jesus taken as a whole, while the more solitary and unpractical types are still further removed from His precepts and example.

Monasticism is also opposed to the Gospel, which reveals the way of life, not as a way of self-culture, but as a way of grace. The monk preferred to live under law rather than under grace, to submit to human ordinances rather than to the free Grace of God in Jesus Christ. This is very candidly set forth in *The Little Flowers of St Francis*, where we are told that Friar Giles was accustomed to say, that he

[1] *Five Centuries of Religion*, p. 11.

preferred life in the Order, because it was an easier life, and made him less dependent upon the Grace of God.[1] The monk did not always covet the place of danger. Entrance into a monastery was sometimes the acceptance of a soft option, not of a great renunciation. It was the easier life. Even where the livelihood was scanty, it was at least tolerably sure, surer than it must often have been outside the monastery. Morally, too, it was easier for some men to seek salvation by a voluntary act of humility and submission to external restraints, than to accept the responsibilities and dangers of Christian life in the world.

It is very generally admitted, even by Protestant scholars, that monasticism, especially at certain times and places, served some useful purposes and therefore had a relative value. The emphasis on individual religion, the feeling of brotherhood created, the facts that the monasteries were often centres of charity, of industry, and of learning, the security they offered to those in distress, and their general witness to the claims of the spiritual world, may all be allowed, and ought not to be forgotten, even if the darkest pictures of corruption are all admitted. Good and evil are strangely mixed together in human characters, and in institutions calling themselves Christian. One would like to speak of the work of the greater mystics in supplementing, though unfortunately not effectually transforming, the official idea of the Kingdom, by their teaching concerning what Tauler called "the Inner Kingdom of God"; for mysticism and monasticism most frequently went together. But the ultimate question for the Christian moralist is as to the type of character produced. And here the evidence of the witnesses is conclusive.

I do not think that two men better qualified to express an opinion could be found than Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas à Kempis, separated from one another by a period of about three hundred years. They were both sympathetic towards monasticism, and knew it thoroughly from within. Yet they both express very clearly their sense of the failure

[1] *Sayings of Father Giles*, ch. 16.

of the monastic system to develop Christian character, and bring men to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Jesus Christ. Writing to the Abbot of Fountains Abbey, Bernard confesses that it was a much more common thing for a worldly man to be converted than for a monk to make any advance in the Divine life. "The rarest bird on earth is the monk, who from the level he hath once reached in the religious life riseth even but a little."[1] Practically all stopped growing. Thomas à Kempis is equally explicit. "What we often see," he says, "is that we were better and purer at the beginning of our conversion than after many years of profession. Our fervour and progress should grow daily, but now it is accounted a great matter, if a man retain part of his first zeal."[2] This is even more disappointing than the testimony of Bernard; for the wonder is not now if the monk grows a little, but if he retains any of his first zeal.

Elsewhere Thomas à Kempis illustrates the failure of monasticism to produce a robust Christian character. The monk, poor soul, is only safe if he keeps within the shelter of the monastic walls, and, when there, avoids the society of others. Misquoting Seneca, he says: "As often as I have gone among men I returned home less a man. This we often find when we talk long together."[3] Is this Christianity? Less a man through contact with men! Will not the strong man be "served by every sense of service which he renders," and find his meat, where his Master found it, in ministering to the good of others? Happily some of the monks did so find it, and were able sometimes to stop thinking about themselves. But it is a dismal picture that Thomas à Kempis draws.

Yet this is not the last word to say. Human institutions rise and fall, but the Gospel of the Kingdom remains. So great is the vitality of that Gospel and so intimate the relation of Jesus Christ to His disciples, that no human

[1] Quoted by Grimley in his *Selections from the Writings of St Bernard*, p. 44.

[2] *Imitatio*, I. 11; Bigg's *Translation*, p. 60.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

institution, however alien from His spirit, can wholly quench the life which He has kindled in the souls of men. In due time from the house of bondage itself God raised up another Moses to lead His people nearer to the Promised Land.

As we look back over the partial failure of the Mediæval Church to appropriate the way of life presented in the Gospel, and understand the mystery of the Kingdom of God, we shall be able to appreciate more intelligently the patience of God. To us the long sojourn under bondage to Egypt, though in the land of Goshen, seems a grievous waste of time. But God, as Origen said, "disposes souls not as for say fifty years of life on earth, but as for the unending age."[1] "With the Lord a thousand years are as one day."[2] However he may explain it, or however he may disguise it, no serious student of history can get on without Isaiah's doctrine of the remnant. But the end is hidden from our view. "Let all the earth keep silence before Him."

Some of us doubtless can remember the thrill which passed through us when first we read the eloquent words with which Professor Seeley closed his chapter on "The Enthusiasm of Humanity," words so appreciative of what has been accomplished in Christendom by the teaching of Jesus, and yet, some would say, so ultra-Calvinistic in their limitation of the number of the elect. "Perhaps the truth is, that there has scarcely been a town in any Christian country since the time of Christ where a century has passed without exhibiting a character of such elevation, that his mere presence has shamed the bad and made the good better, and has been felt at times like the presence of God Himself. And if this be so, has Christ failed? Or can Christianity die?"[3]

Can then the lapse into legalism be justified? By no means. Providence is not fatalism. Those who say that all these ecclesiastical aberrations were inevitable, and that men must needs have come again under the dominion of

[1] *De Principiis*, III. 13. [2] 2 Peter iii. 8.
[3] *Ecce Homo*, 18th ed., p. 161.

law, say what they have no right to say. It is an unwarrantable limitation of the sovereignty of God to imagine that only one course was open to Him; it is an equally unjustifiable degradation of the will of man to say that sin was necessary. It was no more necessary to choose to live under law rather than under grace, than it was necessary to defy the Living God. It is the same problem which meets us everywhere in history. On account of the hardness of men's hearts Moses allows divorce. The demoralisation of life in Israel under the Judges leads to the "sin" of the monarchy. Confucius bows before the strong currents of animism, that he may accomplish the reformation on which he has set his heart. Mohammed, the fierce iconoclast, leaves the Kaabah intact, and contents himself with limiting the number of the Arab sacrifices. Without an imperialistic organisation, it is said, Christianity would have fallen to pieces. But why? It is a strange way of reading history to conclude that because one line of development was taken, that was the only one possible. The Church's Gospel is the surest solvent of such fatalistic teaching. And as a matter of fact a strong central, not to say sacerdotal, authority has never been shown to be necessary for the expansion of Christianity extensively or intensively. It has often been its greatest hindrance.

CHAPTER X

THE REAPPEARANCE OF EVANGELICAL ETHICS

IN seeking to relate the principles of Christian conduct to the universe of reality as known to ancient philosophy the thinkers of the Middle Ages attempted a noble task. But, unfortunately, they generally failed, because of their inadequate ideas both of the Gospel and of nature. The Roman mind was not thoroughly at home either in the kingdom of grace or of nature, for the essential characters of neither the one nor the other could be expressed in terms of Roman law. The Greek might have been more successful, for he had a truer conception of law, as expressing an order inherent in the world of reality, and not something external and statutory as in the Roman view; but his abstract idea of God made it difficult for him to do justice to either realm.

The Greek and Roman conceptions met in the Stoic-Ciceronian description of law as "right reason agreeing with nature, diffused among all, unchanging, everlasting, whose provisions must never be altered"; but the phrasing reveals the outlook of the Roman legalist, and indicates the line along which Roman Christianity was likely to move. The development culminated in the rival schools of the Thomists and Scotists, the latter regarding morality as an assemblage of arbitrary decisions of the Divine will, and the former as an almost limitless sphere for the exercise of the analytic talent of the lawyer. The painstaking attempt of Thomas Aquinas to assimilate positive law, that is the *lex humana* first to *lex naturalis* and then to *lex divina*, both *vetus* and *nova*, and all these again to the *lex æterna* is thoroughly Roman, and it may be magnificent. But from

the point of view of the Ethics of the Gospel it is simply futile. It ends in making God an Almighty Roman jurisconsult, and nature a bundle of important documents tied up with red tape. Positive law is not really assimilated to the *lex æterna*. The eternal law of God, the law of the Spirit of life, is assimilated to the positive enactments of human law courts.

The further attempt of Aquinas to show the fundamental agreement of Christian ethics and the ethics of Aristotle is equally unsatisfactory. It is the work of a lawyer rather than of a philosopher or theologian, more worthy of a canonist than of a constructive thinker. The *Summa* is an ingenious patchwork. It is not a consistent whole, still less a living organism. It is unfair to Aristotle and misrepresents Christianity. The two must be judged on their own merits. They cannot be dovetailed into one another. Faith in the writings of Aquinas has not the same meaning as it had in the New Testament, and it is not regarded as co-extensive with the moral life. It is something superadded with a view to the life hereafter, rather than the foundation of all morality. Aristotle will do very well for this life. Jesus Christ is required mainly for the life to come. Christianity has not transformed the moral life, but supplemented it. Aquinas does not appear to have realised that the morality of the Gospel is in principle the direct opposite of that of Aristotle. But the discrepancy was at length discovered, and with the discovery came both the Reformation and the beginning of modern philosophy. The philosophers rightly preferred to read Aristotle in a non-ecclesiastical setting, while the earliest Reformers rightly objected to the Gospel being made of none effect by an unnatural alliance with the self-regarding philosophy of Aristotle.

All writers on the Reformation lay great stress on the fact that it was a direct attack on the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church and in particular on the sale of Indulgences. And they are right; for it was these things which shocked the consciences of right-minded persons and made the

necessity of reform apparent. But such evils were simply symptoms of the failure of official Christianity to understand and obey the Gospel of God, and to that radical misunderstanding or perversion men like Luther and Tyndale directed their attention. They laid the axe to the root of the tree, which had borne such evil fruit.

And they began with Aristotle. In doing so they were simply giving stronger emphasis to a suspicion and dislike which the early Fathers of the Church had expressed, and which had been felt as far down the Middle Ages as the beginning of the thirteenth century. We have an echo of it in the protestation of the more rationalistic Abelard in one of his letters to Héloise: "I would not be an Aristotle, if it kept me away from Christ." It was about three hundred years before the Reformation that the Roman Church discovered the great advantage which that philosophy might be to the Church as an institution, and forgot the danger it might be to the Gospel. But within these three centuries official Christianity readily accepted every support that Aristotle seemed to offer, both material and formal, for the defence of the Faith. As Fairbairn said: "If Churches always canonised their benefactors, he (Aristotle) would long ago have been at the head of the Roman Calendar." [1]

Roger Bacon and Martin Luther were very different men, but they were at one in their contempt for Aristotle. Writing in the thirteenth century and in the interests not so much of the Gospel as of science and free inquiry, Roger Bacon declared that he would like to burn all the works of Aristotle.[2] Luther, writing in the interests of the freedom of the Christian man as well as of the natural man, is still more violent; and it was very specially the wrong use which the scholastics had made of Aristotle that roused his righteous indignation. Already before the fateful day of All Saints, November 1, 1517, when he nailed the ninety-five Theses against Indulgences to the door of the church at Wittemberg, Luther had expressed clearly his dislike of

[1] *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 119. [2] *Opus Majus*, II. 469.

Aristotle's philosophy. Writing to J. Lange in 1516 he referred to the grief he felt that so much time in the universities was wasted in studying his works, and added that "if Aristotle had not been flesh, he would not hesitate to affirm that he was the very devil."[1] The following year he writes again to his friend rejoicing that so far as his own university was concerned Aristotle was "continuing to fall from his throne and his end is only a matter of time."[2] This was strong language to use regarding "the mischief-making heathen," and no mere anti-philosophical bias could justify it. What did seem to justify it was the use the Church had made of Aristotle. As Professor Lindsay says: "With an unerring instinct he fastened on the scholastic devotion to Aristotle as the reason why what professed to be Christian theology had been changed into something else."[3] The Gospel was made of none effect by the blind leaders of the blind, who could not see the difference between self-culture and faith, between the righteousness of works and the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

In the same way William Tyndale refers to the undue prominence given to Aristotle in the training of the clergy. "A man must first be well seen in Aristotle, ere he can understand the Scriptures, say they." Like the early Church Fathers he saw that Aristotle was at variance with Scripture regarding the eternity of the world and the providence of God and such doctrines as these. But he saw also, and more clearly than they did, the radical difference between the Ethics of the Gospel and the ethics of Aristotle. "Blessed are ye poor," said Jesus. "Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you. . . ." But "Aristotle's felicity and blessedness standeth in avoiding all tribulations; and in riches, health, honour, friends, and authority . . . which felicity pleaseth our spirituality well." But the difference goes deeper still. Aristotle held that man had power to fulfil the law and became righteous by acting

[1] Jacob's *Martin Luther*, p. 53.
[2] Currie, *Letters of Martin Luther*, p. 15.
[3] *Hist. of the Reformation*, I. 469.

righteously, all his virtues springing from his own free-will. Tyndale, on the contrary, thought that righteousness and all the virtues had their origin in the Grace of Jesus Christ. Philosophy, as he saw it taught and professed, did not spring from the love of truth, but was made a minister of pride and an instrument of ecclesiastical domination. It was "philautia," that is, self-love. And even as taught and practised by the ancients, it was devoid of the Christian quality of faith. It did not take a man beyond himself. It was essentially egoistic. "Of like pride are all the moral virtues of Aristotle, Plato and Socrates and all the doctrine of the philosophers, the very gods of our schoolmen." [1]

Here we have in sharpest contrast the difference between Christian and philosophical ethics, between the ethics of the New Testament and the ethics of Aristotle. Some will think that the difference is put too strongly, for the love even of impersonal truth does exalt and ennoble a man. All truth is of God, and He who came to lead men to God called Himself the Truth. But love of truth, whether intellectual or moral, did not seem to Luther and Tyndale to characterise the little Aristotelians who flourished under the ægis of the Church and substituted a formal acquaintance with Aristotle for a real knowledge of the Scriptures. Aristotle was judged by his disciples, just as Jesus Christ Himself has so often been; but with more justification, for the Reformers could find nothing in the self-centred teaching of Aristotle to correct the egoism of his followers. The "wise man" of Aristotle is self-contained and self-sufficient. But Jesus said: "I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear I judge"; [2] and according to the Christian doctrine He has become through His victory over sin and death the interpreter of the moral law and the director of the Christian conscience. "No man liveth unto himself." [3] The centre of the moral universe is God, not man.

This means an infinite enlargement of the moral universe as compared with that of Aristotle, to whom God was

[1] *The Obedience of the Christian Man*, Lovett's Edition, pp. 61, 62, 99.
[2] John v. 30; viii. 28. [3] Rom. xiv. 7.

non-moral and remote from the life of men, an object merely of philosophical contemplation. Christian morality is no mere adjustment of human relationships within the limits of a self-determined universe. It is the transformation of all human relationships through the recognition of the centrality of Jesus Christ for the moral life; and that, on account of what He did and on account of what He is. The Reformers found this expressed for them in the New Testament doctrine of justification by faith. Faith is the resolute acceptance of the new moral universe, the Kingdom of God, which a man can only see when he has renounced all self-righteousness and submitted himself to the righteousness of God. The Kingdom for Luther consisted in two words, "the forgiveness of sin." These words were at least the key which unlocked for him the mystery of the Kingdom, which brought to him a vivid realisation of the Fatherhood of God, the liberty of the Christian man, and a power to claim all human life for Christ, such as had not been given to any since the days of the Apostles.

From what they regarded as the Aristotelian support of a righteousness self-originated and self-achieved, the Reformers turned to the ecclesiastical system which had invoked its aid. Within that sacerdotal imperialism they saw something much worse than the egoism of the natural man, a perversion and corruption of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Spiritual pride, the deadliest enemy of God and man, the mother, as Peter the Lombard had said, of all the seven deadly sins, they discovered at the heart of the whole hierarchical system. The gravest dishonour was done to God and the greatest injury to man by the arrogant pretensions of the priesthood. On the one hand the Grace of God was limited by human enactments, and on the other the direct access of the soul to God, the Christian's native right, was taken away. The Church, not as revealed in the New Testament, but as understood at Rome, was the necessary sphere, and a priesthood, never mentioned in the New Testament, was the necessary instrument of salvation and therefore of the moral life in its completeness. Obedi-

ence to ecclesiastical authority took the place of a personal trust in Christ, and to his own Master the Christian did not stand or fall. The tyranny of an institution had come to reinforce the egoism of the natural man, and to keep Jesus Christ out of His Kingdom.

That was an intolerable thing to the Reformers. The presence of Jesus Christ was veiled by the very institution that ought to have revealed Him; and only through Him could men come to the Father and be perfect. The pope was therefore anti-Christ. With superhuman courage they set themselves against the established system.

But might they not be wrong? That was a question Luther asked himself, and this is how he answered it: "Oh what pain has it cost me, though the Scripture is on my side, to defend myself to my own heart for having dared singly to resist the pope and to denounce him as anti-Christ! How often in the bitterness of my soul have I pressed myself with the papist's argument: 'Art thou alone wise? are all others in error? Have they been mistaken for so long a time? What if you are yourself mistaken and are dragging with you so many souls into eternal condemnation?' Thus did I reason with myself, till Jesus Christ by His own infallible word tranquillised my heart, and sustained it against this argument, as a reef of rock thrown up against the waves laughs at all their fury."[1] It was a vivid realisation of the presence of Jesus Christ through His word, such as he had been unable to find through any of the ordinances of the Church, that sustained Luther in one of the most heroic struggles in which man has ever engaged.

So too in the case of Tyndale—it was the fulfilment of Christ's own word that He would be with His disciples that brought strength to face the principalities and powers in high places. "Christ is with us until the world's end.... What matter maketh it who be against us, be they bishops, cardinals, popes, or whatever names they will."[2] There is

[1] Quoted from Stephen's *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*, p. 204.
[2] *Obed. of the Christ. Man*, p. 38.

a heroic independence of thought and action in Tyndale which nothing but the Gospel could have produced. He was in bondage to no authority, neither philosopher nor theologian, Church, Council, nor pope. As he reflects on the iniquities of the pope and priests, who seemed to him to shut the door of the Kingdom against men who sought to enter, he borrows some of the terrific words which John the Baptist and Jesus hurled at the Scribes and Pharisees; and surely with something of the same kind of justification. To traffic in the merits of Christ and keep the Gospel from the poor—what greater crime could there be? "How came this foul monster to be lord over Christ's merits, so that he hath power to sell that which God giveth freely? O dreamers! yea, O devils and O venomous scorpions, what poison have ye in your tails! O pestilent leaven that so turneth the sweet bread of Christ's doctrine into the bitterness of gall. . . . All the promises of God have they either wiped clean out or thus leavened them with open lies to establish their confession withal. And to keep us from the knowledge of the truth they do all things in Latin. They pray in Latin, they christen in Latin, they bless in Latin, they give absolution in Latin: only curse they in the English tongue." [1]

There is no boldness like that of the man who relies upon the word of God and the promises of Christ. "For Christ hath brought us into the inner temple, within the veil or forehanging, and under the mercy-stool of God and hath coupled us unto God." [2] We have all access, not simply as suppliants, but as priests unto God. "As good is the prayer of a cobbler as of a cardinal," and, Tyndale almost adds, "of an Apostle." [3] In the matter of privilege all Christians are alike. "If Paul were here and loved me . . . what good could he do for me or wish me, but preach Christ and pray to God for me, to open mine heart and to give me His Spirit and to bring me unto the full knowledge of Christ? Unto which port or haven when I am once

[1] *Obed. of the Christ. Man*, p. 219. [2] p. 197. [3] p. 200.

come I am as safe as Paul, fellow with Paul, joint-heir with Paul of all the promises of God."[1]

Similarly Hugh Latimer, who, though writing some twenty years later, belongs to the advance-guard of the Reformation party, regards the pope as anti-Christ, usurping the Divine prerogative of judgment, though he does not even know his own heart.[2] Any sacrifice which Christians had to offer could be as well presented by a poor woman in the belfry as by any bishop.[3] "The poorest ploughman is in Christ equal with the greatest prince that is."[4] All the distinctions of rank, whether social or ecclesiastical, fade away in the presence of Jesus Christ. At His touch the soul comes to itself, and relying upon the word of His promise can face a hostile world. Numbers count for nothing. As much is granted to two or three, so they come in Christ's name, as to many. Had it not been for the young deacon Athanasius, the bishops at Nicæa, though more than three hundred in number, would have determined contrary to God's word; and at that same Council one lame old man, speaking according to the Word, turned the minds of that great company of learned bishops, so that they meddled not with God's decree concerning marriage. More credence is to be given to one man having the holy word of God for him than ten thousand without the Word.[5]

That Word was the power which was again shaking heaven and earth, that the Kingdom which cannot be shaken might remain. It did not wait for official recognition. The promises of God were yea and amen in Christ Jesus,[6] not in the hierarchy and not even in the Body of Christ, but in Jesus Christ Himself, present where two or three were met together in His name.[7]

The application of that promise had not hitherto been confined solely to assemblies of bishops. Bernard of Clairvaux had claimed its fulfilment when his Cistercian monks

[1] *Obed. of the Christ. Man*, p. 243.
[2] *Sermons*, Everyman Libr., p. 127.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 144. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 215.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 250. [6] 2 Cor. i. 20. [7] Matt. xviii. 20.

met together to elect an abbot. Dante, strangely enough, had invoked its aid in defence of duelling under properly constituted judicial conditions. And from time to time in the Middle Ages men had dared to claim a more Scriptural application of the promise.

But at the Reformation it was freed from all ecclesiastical restrictions and made to depend on moral and spiritual conditions. "In the name" was not a magical formula nor an ecclesiastical propriety. "Much wickedness is done *in nomine Domini*. When they come together seeking their own private lust, pleasures, and ambitious desires, it is not *in nomine Domini*, in the name of the Lord. But to seek God's glory, Christ's glory, Christ's true religion, that is *in nomine Christi*."[1] And two Christian men, Latimer thought, were as likely to do that, when they pray together, as a group of cardinals or an assembly of bishops.

This conviction, which the Reformers had of the actual presence of Jesus Christ with His disciples, gave back to Him the place which He had often been denied in the organisation which called itself "the Church." Official Christianity always tended to worship an absent Lord, to look back to Bethlehem and forward to the day of Judgment as the two Advents, and to regard the intermediate ages as a time of government by deputy. The Body of Jesus might be upon the altar, but His Spirit was in heaven, a far-away place, surrounded according to pseudo-Dionysius by a heavenly hierarchy of nine grades, and unapproachable according to the less mystical and more official view save by initiation into the rites of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The Reformation on the contrary started from the conviction that Jesus Christ would honour His own promise and be with His people all the days even unto the end.[2]

That conviction was based not simply upon a text of Scripture, but upon the experience which the Reformers had had of the saving grace of Christ. It was not an absent Saviour who had burst their bonds and let them go

[1] *Sermons*, Everyman Libr., p. 251. [2] Matt. xxviii. 20; cf. xviii. 20.

free. Jesus was still in the midst to guide those whom He had redeemed. No human organisation, though professing to act for Him, could be the final authority for them. It was not enough to be in "the Church," they must be in Christ. "We must first be in Christ," said Luther, "with all our nature, sin, death, and sickness, and know that we are freed therefrom and redeemed and pronounced blessed by Christ. We must swing ourselves above ourselves and beyond ourselves over upon Him, yea be utterly incorporated in Him and be His own." [1] In faith Christ Himself is present, for it is His work within us. It cannot be built up out of our own thoughts or created by a mere fiat of our own wills. Still less is it the product of some magical and non-moral agency. It is the influence of the personality of Christ upon ours, acting through His Word, and not in some merely mystical way. So true faith does not rely upon itself but attaches itself to Christ and becomes partaker in His righteousness. Luther's saying: "Seek thyself only in Christ and not in thyself, so shalt thou find thyself in Him for eternity," [2] distinguishes the Ethics of the Gospel not merely from philosophical ethics, but also from all vague and non-moral mysticisms. It is a much more fruitful principle of conduct than "lose thyself in God." The former means the enrichment of personality: the latter may mean its destruction.

Beyond showing the connection of faith with holiness, and love with the activities of the Christian life, Luther did not enter into a very systematic treatment of Christian Ethics. He gave his opinion upon such questions as "perfectionism," and upon the Christian's attitude to marriage, oaths, war, and trade. He wrote also the Catechisms, but not a manual of ethics. He did not wish to bring men into bondage to any system, or misrepresent the Gospel by turning it into a new law book. "The wind bloweth where it listeth . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus

[1] Quoted in Fisher's *History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 277.
[2] Harless, *Christian Ethics*, p. 14.

is a safer guide for Christian conduct, Luther thought, than "filthy" canon law or soul-corrupting works on casuistry. External regulations may reveal sin, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh. Hierarchical institutions have always shown themselves distrustful of the Apostolic principle: "Walk by the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh . . . for the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."[1] "If we have Christ and keep hold of Him," we may make our own laws. The mind of Christ is the Christian's criterion, and that is not an external ordinance, but a personal possession, the Word of God abiding in us.

So Luther could speak of the Christian "framing a new decalogue," as Paul and Peter and especially Christ Himself did in the Gospel. This is bold and even dangerous teaching, for it might easily be misunderstood. But it is safeguarded by Luther's profound teaching regarding the union of the soul with Christ. It is only "if we have Christ and keep hold of Him," that we can direct our own lives. It is always His work in us quickening conscience, illumining the understanding and strengthening the will. And Luther's bold way of putting the truth shows how far he was from the idea of the "mystic union" as interpreted by some. The relation of the Christian to his Lord was always a moral one. It was a relation which perfected personality. It did not extinguish it.

But Luther did something very much better than construct an ethical system. He rediscovered the Gospel, and in rediscovering it introduced what R. W. Dale called "the immense revolution which Protestantism must ultimately bring about in the whole sphere of the moral and religious life of man."[2] That he himself and many of his followers should have failed to be entirely true to the freedom of the Gospel need not surprise us. It would have been much more remarkable if the Reformers had been able to shake themselves entirely free from the trammels

[1] Gal. v. 23. [2] *Laws of Christ for Common Life*, p. 235.

of the past. Reactions were to be expected. Neither individuals nor communities always maintained the heights to which in moments of clearest vision Luther had led them. And Luther had his limitations like all other great leaders of men. "I will not take upon me to defend him at all points," said Latimer, "but surely he was a goodly instrument."[1] He was God's chosen instrument for revealing the light of the glorious Gospel of the Grace of God more clearly after a thousand years of fitful gleams and shadows. The movement he inaugurated has not yet worked itself clear of all its alien elements or reached the zenith of its influence. But the Gospel which he preached so powerfully is still the only true foundation for the moral life of men and nations.

If I were attempting to write a history of Christian Ethics, it would become necessary to mention many other names, and to show how Melancthon, Zwingli, and Calvin among others, contributed to the fullness of the revival of Gospel Ethics in the sixteenth century. Melancthon, "the little Greek," as Luther called him, was a much more systematic ethical writer than Luther, and not so violently opposed to Aristotle. Indeed, he makes large use of his teaching, even as Aquinas has done, but with a clearer recognition of the claims of Gospel Ethics to an independent treatment. Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer, a lover of the Classics next after his Bible, thought that Socrates was holier than all the Friars, regarded selfishness as the root of all sin, and like the other Reformers was much more concerned to vindicate the freedom of God than the free-will of man. The moral universe has its centre in the Grace of God, not in the free self-determination of man. The differences between Calvin and Luther and between the great religious communities they represent are also intensely interesting and have been carefully described by such writers as Martensen and Wuttke.[2] Protestantism,

[1] *Sermons*, Everyman Libr., p. 183.

[2] Martensen, *Christian Ethics*, p. 40. Wuttke, *Hist. of Christian Ethics*, Vol. I. p. 240. Wuttke finds Calvinist Ethics more theological, objective,

because it is a living Faith, has never assumed one stereotyped form. There are many differences of emphasis not only in theology but in ethics. Nevertheless the resemblances are greater than the differences. All the Reformers found the beginnings of the truly moral life in a redemptive act of God. They all held that the Grace of God in Jesus Christ was the only power which could dislodge self from its proud position as final judge and director of human conduct. They all emphasised the necessity of faith as the means by which man's justification was secured, a faith which is trust in a Person and not simply assent to a dogma, that Person being revealed to the conscience through the word of the Gospel. They all denied the right of a sacerdotal order to come between the soul and its Lord or usurp dominion over the Christian's conscience. They all regarded the world as the arena in which the Christian life was to be lived. Protestant saints have thus all a strong family likeness, and the typical Mediæval saint represents an ideal remote from any of them.

Nor must we forget the part which some of the Roman Catholic Humanists took in the revival of evangelical ethics in the sixteenth century. Humanism was not Christianity, and in the hands of some of its representatives was distinctly antichristian. But the Revival of Learning was directly and indirectly serviceable to Christian morality. It led men to think; and as Thomas Carlyle told us a thinking man is an enemy to the Prince of Darkness, who, whatever imitators he may have had in the Middle Ages, is himself the real antichrist. The Christian Humanists rediscovered the importance of the New Testament, and re-vindicated the worth of the individual. Both of these were long-established Christian doctrines, but they had been much obscured. The leaders of the Church in the early and in the Middle Ages held that the Bible was the

practical, juridical, emphasising the will of God, knowledge, obedience, authority, sobriety, conscientiousness, etc.: the Lutheran more anthropological, subjective, mystical, lyrical, emphasising the love of God, experience, fellowship, spontaneity, joy, gratitude, etc.

best of books and profitable for doctrine and edification. But it came to be regarded also as a dangerous book, needing official interpretation. And the interpreters were not always true to their trust. They misinterpreted it, and instead of commending the truth to every man's conscience, they themselves became the directors of the conscience, and finally, judged it best to withhold the book from the people. The Humanists brought back the Bible and recommended all to read it. "I wish that even the weakest woman," said Erasmus, "should read the Gospel—should read the Epistles of Paul." And why not? Had not Jesus revealed His Messiahship to a Samaritan woman even before Peter had made his confession? "Christ wished His mysteries to be published as openly as possible," said Erasmus. Men and women, learned and unlearned, ought to have the Bible in their own language. In advocating the free use of the Bible the Humanists honoured the Bible, and they honoured the intelligence and conscience of the humblest person—two immortal services to the cause of Christ.

The Humanist who approached nearest to the Protestant Reformers was John Colet. He was a Reformer before Luther, lecturing at Oxford as early as 1496 on the Epistle to the Romans and finding in his New Testament his guide to a new way of life. In 1511 Colet, who had now become Dean of St Paul's, preached his great sermon to Convocation, in which he told the clergy "to reform their lives and put away pride and ambition and covetousness, knowing that if they wished their people to live after the will of God they must first do so themselves."

And it was not simply as a preacher of righteousness and a denouncer of the lawlessness of the clergy that he came forward. He advocated a return to what Erasmus called "the philosophy of Christ." "Why do you extol to me such a man as Aquinas," he said. "If he had not been so very arrogant, indeed, he would not surely so rashly and proudly have taken upon himself to define all things. And unless his spirit had been somewhat worldly,

he would not surely have corrupted the whole teaching of Christ by mixing it with his profane philosophy." [1] Like Luther and Tyndale he saw that the philosophy of Aristotle was something quite different from the philosophy of Christ, and ought never to have been united with it.

So, too, he anticipated the Reformers in his attack on the sacerdotal doctrines of the Roman Church. "It is not the part of men (even of bishops, as the context shows) to loose the bonds of sin: nor does the power belong to them of loosing or binding anything." [2] Also, Humanist though he was, he saw how learning may lead men astray. Writing to Erasmus, he says: "There is nothing better for this short life than that we live in holiness and purity and daily give heed that we may be cleansed and illuminated, and may attain to that which the Pythagorean and Cabbalistical lore of Reuchlin promises, but which in my judgment we can acquire in no other way than through ardent love and imitation of Jesus." [3] The way of holiness and of knowledge was, according to Colet, through love and imitation of Jesus.

No one would care to deny that so far as this goes it is Christian Ethics. The moral life is closely connected with Jesus Christ, and manifests itself in the love and imitation of Him. J. R. Green summed up Colet's position as follows: "His faith stood simply in the vivid realisation of the person of Christ. In the life and sayings of its Founder he found a simple and rational Christianity, whose fittest expression was the Apostles' Creed. The image of the child Jesus was placed over the Master's chair in his Grammar School at St Paul's with the words 'Hear ye Him' graven beneath it." [4]

This picture of Jesus of Nazareth and the gentle but insistent "Hear ye Him," made Colet a better preacher,

[1] Seebohm, *Oxford Reformers*, p. 54.
[2] Lindsay, *Hist. of Reformation*, I. p. 170.
[3] *Epistle*, 586.
[4] *Short Hist. of English People*, p. 299.

a more evangelical preacher than many. But there is something lacking in this presentation of the Gospel as compared with the Apostolic. It is the *Imitatio Christi* taken out of its monastic setting and made much more human. But it hardly does full justice to that, still less to the Gospel. It is not the image of the child Jesus that makes the deepest appeal to the conscience. It is Jesus as exalted and victorious over sin and death who gives repentance and remission of sins. The cult of the child has been fashionable both in Mediæval and modern times, but its appeal has been chiefly to the emotions. The emphasis will be elsewhere when a great moral revolution is in progress.

This will be evident if we turn again to Colet's more evangelical pupil, William Tyndale. In his controversy with the Bishop of Rochester, Tyndale brings out much more clearly than his master an essential difference between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Rochester seemed to Tyndale to exalt the Gospels at the expense of the Gospel. "There is more Gospel," says Tyndale, "in one Epistle of Paul, that is Christ is more fully preached and more promises rehearsed in one Epistle of Paul, than in the three first evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke."[1] That may be a controversial overstatement, for, as we have seen, all the four Gospels concentrate on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the facts on which the Apostolic Gospel rested. But as against Rochester, Tyndale was right. The teaching of Jesus through His Apostles has always been a greater difficulty to the Church of Rome than the teaching of Jesus as given to the multitudes before His death and resurrection. A hierarchical order finds it hard to do justice to the Apostolic conception of an ever-living and ever-present Lord of the Church, personally directing and controlling by His Spirit every member of His Body. The Apostles' Creed itself regards Jesus as an absent Deity, and in expressing belief in the Holy Spirit

[1] Seebohm, *Oxford Reformers*, p. 142.

gives no hint that that Spirit has any vital connection with Christ or with the Church or with the moral life of the Christian.

In the same controversy Tyndale brings out another point of difference between the Reformers and Rome. Rochester held that love preceded faith, whether as a sacramental gift to the infant at baptism, thus becoming the seed out of which faith ultimately grew, or in some more intelligent and moral way. Tyndale held that we must first believe God before we can love Him. "Rochester will have love to go before and faith to spring out of love. Thus antichrist turneth the roots of the tree upwards I must first love the bitter medicine and then believe it is wholesome."[1] Like Luther, Tyndale gave the priority to faith. We must first believe the love that God hath for us. Through faith love will spring up in the heart. Love may be the Omega of the Christian life, but faith is the Alpha.

And Colet's friend Erasmus shares with him the honour of trying to introduce a true revival within the Roman Catholic Church. It would be possible to collect a long list of passages from his works, which contain resemblances to Reformation doctrines as well as denunciations of the corruptions of popes, clergy, and monks, *e.g.*: "Faith is the only approach to Christ."[2] "The Gospel is the justification by faith in Jesus the Son of God."[3] "When Christ forgives sins He speaks neither of our satisfactions nor our works. It is enough to come to the feet of Jesus."[4] But we cannot resist the impression that it is as a scholar and commentator on his beloved New Testament that Erasmus is speaking, rather than as having himself been thoroughly laid hold of by the great Reformation doctrine. Justification by faith was a living experience for Luther, but for Erasmus it was true New Testament doctrine,

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 152. [2] *Enchir.*, V. 21.

[3] *Paraphrase*, Rom. i. 13.

[4] *Paraphrase*, Mark ii. 12. Other references will be found in R. J. Murray's *Erasmus and Luther*.

which, as true, should be received and taught, but which in practice requires to be limited out of deference to man's free-will.

And when attacking ecclesiastical institutions there is a difference. It is because they have become corrupt rather than because they are in themselves defective, or aggravations of man's natural tendency to rely on works, that he attacks them. He was to the end unwilling to assist in breaking up the Mediæval framework of religion. His sympathies, like those of Sir Thomas More and others of these Roman Catholic Humanists, were Mediæval rather than Apostolic. Yet in encouraging a scholarly and unfettered study of Scripture, these men were promoting the cause of evangelical ethics. To get back to the New Testament is to get back to the creative ideas of the Church and the fundamental principles of the moral life.

CHAPTER XI

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS— PROTESTANTISM, ROMANISM, HUMANISM

AT the Reformation, which, notwithstanding the weighty reasons given by Troeltsch for a later date will still seem, I think, to most of us the beginning of the Modern period, three lines of development became possible. Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and Humanism, each went its own way in the endeavour to direct or describe the moral life of men. The Gospel, the Church, and Nature were now the rival authorities in Ethics.

It would, indeed, be incorrect to assert that the distinctions were absolute or always clearly visible. Such absolute distinctions are seldom, if ever, found in human affairs. Protestants have not invariably made the Gospel the principle of the moral life. Individual Roman Catholics have not always allowed the Church to overshadow the Gospel. And Humanism, as represented by the philosophers, has sometimes limited, sometimes despised, sometimes transcended "Nature." Yet there is value in the distinctions.

Of the three ultimate authorities, Gospel, Church, and Nature, the last has suffered most at the hands of those adopting it. It is the most indefinite and variable of the three words, and has commonly been used to indicate very different conceptions. In the seventeenth century Plato was reproached because he did not "screw up" the concept of Nature "to a higher and more spiritual notion." Aristotle, to whom the empiricists and naturalists owe much, sometimes speaks of "Nature" as a *deus ex*

machina.[1] The Stoics consistently, but vaguely spoke of the life according to Nature as the life according to Reason. Other Greek moralists substituted convention for Nature, and others reverted to the undifferentiated continuum of infantile experience. They were very far from being unanimous in the meaning they gave to "Nature," or in their way of treating her.

The same kind of thing has happened whenever the spirit of free inquiry has turned to ultimate problems. Cosmos or chaos has been a perpetually-recurring question. Philosophers have not always agreed that "Nature" is a rational system, or that Reason is the only channel through which she can reveal and vindicate her authority. But one thing seems clear, that whether "Nature" be a legitimate or illegitimate offspring of Reason, she is at present much more popular than her mother. There is the charm of mystery about her. The life according to "Nature" may mean almost anything or nothing.

Nevertheless, to the common person, religious or irreligious, "Nature" generally does mean something. However variable and indefinite the word may be, it has nevertheless fixed itself in the language of mankind. The life according to Nature commonly denotes something different from, if not opposed to, a life inspired by the Gospel, or regulated by the Church.

Protestantism.

Protestantism is more variable in form than Romanism. The latter, especially since the sixteenth century, has become more formal and stereotyped. The former, having left behind some of its earlier limitations, is still advancing towards the measure of the stature of its manhood in Christ Jesus. It must not be identified with any parti-

[1] Henry Jackson, *E.R.E.*, Vol. I. p. 799. But Aristotle never regarded Nature, after the manner of some modern writers, as an all-inclusive concept. Chance, necessity, and mind were extra-natural, but real.

cular phase of its past life, nor restricted to this or that Denomination in the present. It is an organism, not a rigid system like that of Rome, a spiritual body, not an external organisation, a church, and not a bureaucracy. Like the Kingdom of God it cometh not with observation. It eludes, as does every other living thing, exact definition. It is more than any of its particular manifestations, and because it has within it the principle of life through the Gospel, it does not yet appear what it may become. Its future depends upon its fidelity to the Gospel. If it puts men's thoughts about God or men's ideas concerning the Church before the Gospel it will go the way of the Greek and Latin Churches. Dogmas and creeds, churches and ministers are all subordinate to the Gospel. The Church itself was created through the Gospel. The Gospel was not created by the Church. The ultimate court of appeal for Protestants is the Word of the Gospel, that Word by which the new creation lives.

The word Protestantism in the original meaning of protestation was admirably adapted to express not simply the attitude of the Reformers in their appeal for freedom in 1529, when the name gained currency, but also the spirit and genius of the whole movement. It is not primarily negative, but positive. It is not simply a protest against spiritual tyranny or against the doctrinal errors and abuses of Rome, but a protestation in favour of the Gospel and the liberty which it brings. It is intensely positive. Protestation is witness-bearing, and the original sense is well-expressed in Shakespeare's "Youths that even now protest their first of manhood."[1] Protestants are witnesses to the reality of the new life in Christ and to the inalienable rights and responsibilities of Christian manhood.

One of the most famous descriptions of Protestantism is contained in Chillingworth's phrase: "The Bible, the Bible only the religion of Protestants." It is admirable as

[1] *Macbeth*, V. ii. 11.

indicating the radical divergence from Rome. It also justly emphasises the positive witness of Protestantism to the authority and sufficiency of the Revelation once committed to the saints. "By the religion of Protestants," said Chillingworth, "I do not understand the doctrine of Luther or Calvin or Melancthon nor the Confession of Augusta or Geneva nor the Catechism of Heidelberg, nor the Articles of the Church of England—no, nor the harmony of Protestant Confessions; but that wherein they all agree—that is the Bible."[1] The Bible is more than all the creeds and confessions of Christendom. It is a complete and authentic guide for this life, and contains everything necessary for salvation. This was and remains the faith of all Protestant Churches.

Chillingworth himself was prepared to narrow down the issue still further. He maintained that any one of the four Gospels contained every "essential and necessary part of the Gospel," and so was rightly called a "Gospel." If we had only one of the Gospels "we should not want anything necessary to salvation." And as we have seen, this is so far true in that each of the four Gospels very clearly leads up to the Apostolic Gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Particularising still further he says: "By the Gospel of Christ I understand not the whole history of Christ, but all that makes up the covenant between God and man."[2]

The early Reformers, Luther, Tyndale and Calvin, took the same principle to guide them in their valuation of Scripture, Luther with a boldness of inference, which has shocked many Protestants since. But, however faulty some of his judgments may have been, his controlling motive, as in the case of all evangelical Protestants, was love of the Gospel. It is as the complete and infallible witness to the Gospel that the Bible has gained and retained its place of absolute pre-eminence among Protestants. They remember that it was the discovery of the Gospel in the Old Testament that enabled the early

[1] *Works*, 12th ed., p. 464. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 266.

Christians to accept the Jewish Scriptures as part of their Bible, and that it was through the Gospel that they got their New Testament also. The Creation of the Bible is bound up with the history of the Gospel. The religion of the Bible is the religion of Protestants, because it is the religion of the Gospel.

Here Luther, Tyndale, and Calvin, representing the three largest families of the one common stock, are in absolute agreement; and if during the period of Protestant scholasticism, and in more rationalistic groups, aberrations have occurred, the main body of Protestants have been true to the Faith for which these men lived and suffered. Amid all the rich variety of thought and sentiment and practice, diversities of gifts and ministrations and workings, witnessing to the one Divine spirit, who distributes to each as He will, Protestants have stood for the primacy of the Gospel as the guide of life and the only means of salvation. Lutherans, Calvinists and Zwinglians, Anglicans, Independents and Quakers, Pietists and Moravians and Methodists, have all gone back to the Gospel as the foundation of the moral life. The Anabaptists were generally more Mediæval than Protestant, and so perhaps ought not, at least without distinctions, to be included. But for the rest, the Gospel was, as Paul describes it, the revelation of the Mystery of the Kingdom, or as Peter says, "the Word of God which liveth and abideth."[1]

It has sometimes been said that Protestantism represents a Pauline type of Christianity, and Roman Catholicism a Petrine. But the distinction has little reality. The ethical teaching of Rome hardly finds more support in the writings of Peter than of Paul. In some respects it may seem at first sight to fare even worse. Two of the most important words in the vocabulary of Roman theology, "Church" and "law," words which the Apostle Paul, having first stripped of their Jewish connotation, introduced into the circle of Christian ideas, are avoided by

[1] 1 Peter i. 24.

the Apostle Peter. He never uses either. The ministers of the Christian society are also kept further in the background than in the Pauline Epistles, and little or no importance is attached to external organisation. The Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers —that doctrine which John Hales so well expressed in the seventeenth century when he said, that the keys of the Kingdom were given to clergy and laity, male and female, not only for themselves but for others, and that to save a soul every man is a priest[1]—is consonant with the teaching of Peter as of Paul. Both find in the actual Gospel of the atoning death of Christ and the power of His resurrection the means of moral regeneration and growth which Rome finds in the Sacraments. The doctrine of justification by faith, which the Apostle Paul had formulated in defending the Gospel against the Judaisers, was naturally prominent when similar conditions recurred in the sixteenth century. But the writings of the Apostle Peter are equally decisive against self-righteousness, institutional morality and legality of all kinds.

From an ethical point of view Protestantism is as much a return to Peter as to Paul. The ethics of official Romanism cannot be brought into line with either.

In laying so much stress on the non-evangelical and non-Apostolic character of Romanist ethics as compared with Protestant, I may seem to some to be unjust to the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestant Churches it will be said have no monopoly of the Gospel. And I gladly admit it. I do not know that they have ever claimed it, or identified after the manner of Rome their own organisations with the Kingdom of God. The facts of the Gospel are at least partially stated in the creeds of Western Christendom. But they appear there as items of belief, rather than as the foundation of the moral life. The death of Jesus Christ is proclaimed in the Mass, but it is with unscriptural additions which detract from its ethical value.

[1] Tulloch, *Rational Theology in the Seventeenth Century*, I. p. 246.

Considerable use of the Bible is sometimes allowed by Rome, especially when public opinion demands it, but it is in complete subordination to a non-Apostolic priesthood and pope. The Word of God has not free course in Catholicism. The Gospel is not there the final authority. "An implicit faith in men or in the Church," said Whichcote, "this is popery. The Romanists adulterate what is true in religion and superadd what is false."[1] For this reason not only Puritans, but Broad Churchmen and even High Churchmen, like the gentle-spirited George Herbert, were agreed in the seventeenth century that the pope was Antichrist.

> As new and old Rome did one Empire twist;
> So both together are one Antichrist.

In restoring the Bible to Christendom the Reformers brought back the Gospel of the Kingdom which had been hid from so many of the wise and prudent. In the light of the Divine Word conscience asserted itself and men knew that they had received authority to become sons of God, and hastened to submit themselves to the righteousness of God. That initial freedom of the individual man in the presence of His Saviour was "the primary postulate of the Reformation; and there is nothing in any of the Protestant confessions at variance with it."[2] It was completed and secured through the obedience of faith. Here in the Saviour's power to deal with the human will and conscience lay the supreme mystery of the Kingdom of God: the greatest of all miracles, because it was not in the realm of "Nature" or of magic, but of free personality. It was a moral transformation by purely moral processes.

And just because Protestants have realised more fully the ethical character of the Kingdom of God they have done much to restore the Apostolic doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood and to make the filial relation fundamental

[1] *Aphorisms*, 698. [2] Tulloch, *op. cit.*, I. p. 29.

for the Christian character. That doctrine depended for Luther, as for the Apostles, upon the fact of justification by faith. Formal creeds with their clauses expressing belief in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; paternosters mechanically repeated as parts of what Arthur Clough called "metallic beliefs and regimental devotions"; popes and father-confessors and abbots of monasteries and other "fathers-in-God" failed to give the worshipper any vivid conception of the Fatherhood of God. The realisation of Divine sonship, the joy of the child of God in the presence of his Father, came back to the world with the Reformation teaching of justification by faith alone and the right of free access to God. Luther's *Freedom of the Christian Man* and Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, represent two distinct types of religion and morality. Only in the former was the Kingdom of the Father a bright reality.

So too the kinship of the Kingdom, the brotherhood of the redeemed in Christ, assumed a deeper meaning in Protestantism. It was made possible through personal contact with Christ, not by natural ties or ecclesiastical ordinances. It is those who have received the witness of the Holy Spirit in their hearts crying Abba, Father, who recognise others as children of the Kingdom and sons of the Father in heaven. Mere acquiescence in the creeds and ordinances and sentiments of an external society, mere *fides implicita* is enough to constitute membership in the Church of Rome, but that kind of fellowship is quite different from the brotherhood of the Kingdom, as revealed in the New Testament. Serviceable as it may often be, and powerful as it undoubtedly is, there is nothing necessarily Christian about it. The Church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail is held together by very different bonds. It is through the personal faith of its members, each apprehending Christ and each apprehended by Him, that the Church is constituted and holds together. It is just because Protestantism lays more stress than Romanism does on personal faith that its brotherhood is

more Apostolic and significant. It represents the deepest and truest type of social life. "There is no community possible," said Thomas Carlyle, "among men who believe only on hearsay."

Men who can understand only the unity of a visible institution organised like any other earthly institution and exerting its influence in the same kind of way are naturally inclined to make much of the divisions of Protestantism. But those divisions are neither as "unhappy" nor as real as they are often represented to be. Protestants, to use a phrase of Lessing's, "do not wish to see the same bark grow upon all trees," or all trees to be alike in other respects. Two pennies may be alike. But two faces are not. No two Christians, led by the Spirit of God, will ever be alike, and no institutions controlled by the Spirit will develop in exactly the same kind of way. Uniformity is death.

The cause of true Christian unity has gained immeasurably through the differences of Protestant thought and life. It was a most fortunate thing for Christianity in England, when the Separatists vindicated against an Erastian Church the right of Jesus Christ to determine by His Spirit how His followers might worship the Father together; or when the Quakers showed their fellow-Christians, contending with a zeal which was not according to knowledge for ministerial authority and ecclesiastical forms, that the real qualifications for Christian service came not from external ordinances, but from the Spirit of the Living God; or when the Methodists by their fervent appeals to heart and conscience put to shame the cold orthodoxy of Calvinist Dissenters and the indifference of the Anglican clergy. These divisions and others have been of incalculable benefit to the cause of Christ. They have not only brought to light forgotten truths, but they have shown that the unity of the Church can never be realised by restrictive measures, by limiting the rights of individual or social access to God, by quenching the inner light of conscience, or the fervour of a passionate love to the Saviour.

To seek for such uniformity is to betray Christianity itself. To invoke the sacred words in which Jesus prayed for the unity of His followers in furtherance of such methods is irreverence and impiety.

Another way in which the ethical character of the Kingdom of God has been reasserted in Protestantism is by its emphasis on the virtue of truthfulness, towards men in the world as well as towards fellow-Christians. Jesus spoke of Himself as the Truth, and before Pilate, questioning Him concerning His Kingdom, He said that His mission was to bear witness to the truth.[1] The medicinal lie of Plato was thoroughly acclimatised in the Mediæval Church, and lying for the sake of an institution has been sanctioned by long Roman usage. The claims of the papacy were supported by falsehood. The Roman Church having first identified itself with the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, said with pagan Rome, what has truth to do with religion, and rested its claims to spiritual and civil domination on forged decretals and legends. It further held that no faith need be kept with heretics. But the lie, medicinal or otherwise, has never been at home in Protestantism. The Kingdom has been regarded as essentially moral, and revealed only in the truth and righteousness which it brings.

Protestantism has done a great service to Christianity also in abolishing the distinction between the commands of God and the evangelical counsels. In a Kingdom of Grace there can be no place for meritorious extras. Jesus Christ has not lessened by one jot or tittle the all-inclusiveness of the Divine commands. He has written them upon the hearts of men and invested them with the power of an endless life. The love, which fulfils the law, can tolerate no extras and admit of no exceptions. The notorious view of Cardinal Bellarmine that he who loves God with all his heart need not obey the Divine counsels, but only the Divine commands,[2] rests upon a legal, not evangelical, conception of love.

[1] John xviii. 37.

[2] *De Monachis*, IX.

In its outlook upon the world Protestantism also claims to have been truer to the New Testament ideal. Even in its severest and most extravagant forms Protestant Puritanism has never been anything like as contemptuous of the natural joys of life as Mediæval Puritanism or the Puritanism of modern Catholicism, both in Jansenist and more orthodox forms. If Protestantism has not with the Council of Trent regarded marriage as a sacrament, it has not denied that "sacrament" to the ministers of the Gospel, nor regarded marriage as a lower condition of life. Its relation to the civil authority has been one of respect and obedience, as the Lord and His Apostles enjoined. It has not asserted with Hildebrand that the authority of kings was founded in pride and lust, but maintained that it was right to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. It has found the highest type of life in the calling of God in the world. The nations in which Protestantism is purest and strongest have taken the fullest share in the world's progress. Protestant Prussia only collapsed when she gave up her evangelical faith and applied to the State the maxims which the Society of Jesus had popularised in the Church of Rome, that the end justifies the means, and that truth and honour may be sacrificed to the good of an institution.

But Protestantism took over many things from the Mediæval Church, which it could not find in the New Testament. The contention here is not that Protestantism has always been faithful to the Gospel way of life, but that it has gradually been working itself clear of pagan mediæval survivals. Take, for example, the intolerance which has at different times manifested itself in Protestant communities. Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher, is reported to have said that all the Churches had given way to the persecuting spirit except the Baptists, and then to have added, "and they have never had the opportunity." The opportunity has certainly counted for much. Alliance with the State or with other powerful worldly interests has very frequently

proved too strong a temptation. It has, unfortunately, been so from the time of Constantine onwards. Less than fifty years separated the eloquent plea of Lactantius for religious toleration from the open advocacy of a policy of persecution by another Christian writer, Firmicus Maturnus, and meanwhile the civil authority had come into the hands of Emperors, who professed Christianity. Bishops have been amongst the noblest defenders of the weak against oppression; but bishops also, even Protestant bishops have sometimes been amongst the most determined opponents of civil and religious liberty. It was not the Romanists who put Greenwood and Barrowe and Penry to death. Calvinists of the Long Parliament, as well as Arminians like Laud, were untrue to the principles of religious liberty. Protestants have not been blameless, though there may be differences and degrees of guilt. Lord Acton thought that Roman Catholics had persecuted on practical grounds and under the influence of two ideas, viz., the criminality of apostacy and the impotence of the State; but that Protestants persecuted on purely speculative grounds, the influence of Scripture, and the supposed interests of the Protestant party; and he also thought that, as the motives of persecution were different, Protestants could not have learnt persecution from the Catholics![1] As though a child in letting off firearms were not imitating his father because his motives were not quite the same. It was not easy for the Protestant world to shake itself free from the opinions of the most enlightened pagans as Plato, especially when they had been consecrated by more than a thousand years of Catholic practice. Nevertheless they did so; and before that process of emancipation was anything like complete, the historian Hume could say of one Protestant country, "the precious spark of liberty was kindled and preserved by the Puritans alone, and it was to this sect that the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution."[2]

[1] *History of Freedom and Other Essays*, pp. 165–6.
[2] *History of England*, ch. 40.

Humanists and Socinians may claim some share in the spread of toleration, but it was not so much by the enunciation of more enlightened views that the cause of freedom was served as by suffering for conscience' sake; and it was the Gospel that enabled the Puritans to suffer.[1] The Gospel triumphed in the Puritan over the belief in persecution which he had himself inherited from the past.

Roman Catholicism.

There is no need to say much regarding the changes which have taken place in Roman Catholicism since the Reformation, because these have been away from rather than towards a more evangelical ethic. The counter-revival in the Roman Church during the sixteenth century was marked by the mitigation of some of the most glaring practical abuses, and by an increase of zeal for the outward institutions of the Church. The rise of the Society of Jesus and the meetings of the Council of Trent were great events in the history of Catholicism, and of momentous importance in determining the course of future history. But there were few, if any, signs of a return to the Gospel. The more evangelical elements in Augustine's teaching, which had led to repeated protests against the official teaching of Rome during the Middle Ages, were thrown further into the background by the Council of Trent, "which taught Pelagianism in Augustinian language." When the Jansenists in the seventeenth century tried to recover the Augustinian doctrine of grace and the Augustinian emphasis on personal religion, they were bitterly persecuted. The energy of Rome was concentrated on tightening up the organisations of the Church, increasing its membership, and laying down innumerable rules for the conduct of life. An unprecedented number of ethical writings appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth

[1] Cf. T. C. Hall, *Hist. of Ethics within Organised Christianity*, p. 402.

centuries, but they were casuistical in character and revealed with greater emphasis the non-evangelical and legalistic view of morality, that the Roman Church has always taken. In spite of its severe handling by Pascal in the *Provincial Letters*, Jesuit morality remained a strong leaven corrupting the life of men and nations. After the suppression of the Order and its subsequent revival, somewhat greater caution was used in the enforcement of Jesuit principles. But official recognition was given to an ethic very similar to that of the Jesuits by the canonisation of Alphonse Liguori in 1829, and his elevation to the proud position of a doctor of the Church in 1871. His works contain "not one word worthy of censure," and can be implicitly followed by all father-confessors.

The more recent additions to Roman doctrine have been such as Liguori might have approved, and have conducted the Roman Church further from the Faith which was once delivered to the saints. They have made Christian morals more difficult within that communion. The various reform movements within the Roman Church in modern times, while they are evidences of a desire on the part of some for a more evangelical form of Christianity, do not meet with the encouragement they deserve. The hierarchy rather than the Gospel dominates the moral situation. But God has not left Himself without witness. Some day even the Roman Catholic priesthood may see that the veil of the Temple has been rent and access into the holy of holies secured for all through the death and victory of Jesus Christ; that the ministers of the heavenly temple are not a sacerdotal order but the pure in heart; and that the mystery of the Kingdom of God is righteousness and joy and peace in the Holy Ghost. Until then Rome must needs present a distorted view of the Gospel, and fail to teach the ethics of the new life in Jesus Christ.

Humanism.

But another line of revolt against the authority of the ecclesiastical system was possible. While the Reformers sought to lead men back to the Gospel as containing the principles and powers of the moral life, the philosophers endeavoured to revindicate the authority and competence of Reason. Surprisingly little, however, was accomplished for more than a century. Humanism at first produced no constructive thinker of the first rank in moral philosophy. Those who had emancipated themselves from the authority of the Church and failed to find in the Gospel a new way and power of life succumbed to the spell of Greece and Rome. They had not sufficient vigour to create an ethic for the modern world. The age of Reason had not yet arrived.

The sixteenth century was an age of discovery rather than of reflection. A new sense of the wonder and mystery of the world had come to men with the opening up of a larger universe of thought and life. They were as yet unprepared to interpret it in terms of Reason. It was the opportunity for the sceptic and the mystic, for the unbeliever and the enthusiast, for a Montaigne and for a Bruno: and in poetry for the naïve poet, the man who according to Schiller's famous distinction was not the interpreter of Nature, but Nature itself—William Shakespeare.

Few men have been more successful than Montaigne in fixing the boundaries of the world in which they wished to live. Born a Catholic and dying a Catholic, the truths of the Christian religion had little, if any, influence upon his life. The Kingdom of God revealed to men in the Gospel was entirely outside the range of his apprehension, and he probably wished it so to be. The order of Nature was only a little less foreign to his ways of thinking. He speaks indeed occasionally of Nature as "our mother," just as he might have spoken of "our mother the Church." But it is mere politeness, not affection. Nature is to him a

veiled and mysterious goddess mocking the vain efforts of man to find out her secrets. He is interested in what men say about her, and had a vivid way of describing some of the experiences men call natural. These things pleased him greatly as isolated facts and fancies, which he could select and dismiss according to his mood. But Nature as a system or order or intelligible whole, Nature as instinct with purpose, or possessing laws, or implying obligations, was not at all to his mind. He was neither fitted nor disposed to seek a rational basis for morals.

Bruno was a man of much greater seriousness, integrity, and courage. Failing to find in any of the creeds and sacraments of the Roman Church a revelation of the glory and presence of the Living God, he turned to Nature and found himself conducted, as he says, to " the very precincts of heaven." The world of Nature became to him " a most august empire," the Kingdom of God on earth. With all the earnestness and intensity of his nature, strengthened no doubt by his previous training as a Dominican monk, he testified in life and by his death to the faith that was in him.

He endeavoured also to give a philosophical justification for his belief in Nature as a universe alive and instinct with divinity. His daring metaphysical flights have not generally been considered very successful, and from the point of view of the moral philosopher they are specially disappointing. His speculations certainly supply no rational foundation for morals. They appear to leave no room for one. The identification of the Kingdom of God with the natural sphere robs morality of its specific meaning, and will seem to many a more serious mistake than the identification of the Kingdom with the Church, against which Bruno rebelled. Yet his work was not only a needful protest against an ascetic misuse of the world, and the identification of the Kingdom with an ecclesiastical organisation, but a foreshadowing of more modern attempts to base morality and religion on experience of a sentimental or æsthetic type.

Neither Montaigne nor Bruno found any rational basis for morals in Nature. Nor did anyone else in the sixteenth century. There were Humanists amongst the Roman Catholics and amongst the Protestants; but those who acknowledged the authority neither of Church nor Gospel made no distinguished contributions to moral philosophy. They were preparing the way for natural science. "Modern natural science," says Windelband, "is the daughter of Humanism."[1]

[1] *A History of Philosophy*, Tuft's Trans., p. 351

CHAPTER XII

THE ETHICS OF NATURE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

IT was only very slowly and tentatively in the seventeenth century that Reason asserted her claims to be the final authority in ethics. Most of the philosophers of the century were Churchmen, Protestant or Romanist, believing in the authority of the Gospel or Church or both. Even a man like Spinoza, who trusted most unreservedly in the light of Nature or Reason, used theological language, and expressed his belief that Christ had knowledge "not deducible from the foundations of our natural knowledge." Ethics had not yet become detached from theology, and neither of them was yet regarded as a natural science.

It is not remarkable that men moved slowly in this matter. Those who were accustomed to the authority of the Gospel or of the Church could hardly be expected to hail with delight any new attempt to find in Nature the foundation of morals. The moral customs and ideas of a people are among its most stable possessions, and are not easily changed. There is a wise conservatism as well as a foolish inertia in the moral constitution of man. Both must be allowed for in estimating the difficulties, which Reason had to overcome in making good her claim to find in the natural order a sanction for morals. And what is Reason? Why should we obey her? If two philosophers disagree as to what is rational or natural, how is the ordinary man to decide between them? It would be very foolish, if a man were to make Reason the supreme arbiter in morals,

before he had found adequate answers to questions such as these.

Thus men hesitated long, especially in common-sense England before they gave to Nature, as interpreted by Reason, the place of authority in ethics. So great indeed was this reluctance that Mr Thornton in his *Conduct and the Supernatural* finds it possible to say that "for some two hundred years or more after the Reformation and the rise of modern philosophy no one ever questioned the supremacy of the Christian Ethic, though from every other quarter inroads were made on the received traditions."[1]

This statement must not however, if generally true, be taken to mean that men did not discuss morals. The battles of the sixteenth century were quite as much about Ethics as about Dogmas. The ethics of Luther were very different from the ethics of Loyola. But for the most part men wanted a Christian Ethic of some sort, and liked to think that their conduct was "Christian."

Throughout the seventeenth century then both in England and on the Continent, ethics continued to be closely connected with theology and the Churches. Those who wished for a purely natural or rational ethic were in a small minority.

John Smith, one of the Cambridge Platonists, has given us an interesting classification of the different types of moralists he had met. He divides them into four classes: (1) the complex and multifarious man; (2) the rationalist; (3) the mystic; and (4) the metaphysical and contemplative man. The first is the man "in whom sense and reason are so intermixed and twisted up together that his knowledge cannot be laid out into first principles." The second, or rationalist, is the man who "thinks not fit to view his own face in any other glass but that of reason and understanding." The third, or mystic, is the man "who has an inward sense of virtue and goodness far transcendent to all mere speculative opinion, but whose soul is apt to heave and

[1] Page 3.

swell with a sense of his own virtue and knowledge." The fourth and last is the true metaphysical and contemplative man, "who running and shooting above his own logical or self-rational life pierceth into the highest life. Such a one by universal love and holy affection abstracting himself from himself endeavours the nearest union to the Divine essence." [1]

The English Philosophers.

If we take the leading English philosophers whom all would include in their list of seventeenth-century moralists, such as Bacon, Hobbes, Cumberland, the Cambridge Platonists and Locke, we find ourselves unable to place any of them in John Smith's second class, the pure or exclusive rationalists. Bacon was not a rationalist, but adopted a quite different method in his philosophy, and in morals fell back on authority. There were large regions of life on which the stars of philosophy did not shine. "It must be confessed," he said, "that a great part of the moral law is higher than the light of nature can aspire to." [2] The father of modern science was at one with the theologians and metaphysicians in thinking that ethics was not a natural science.

Nor was Hobbes a rationalist, though more friendly than Bacon to the deductive method. But his interests, like those of Bacon, were naturalistic. He starts with what he conceives to be the natural state of man, the state in which he was utterly selfish and constrained only by such motives as fear, pride, and the love of power. The natural condition of man being antisocial was necessarily anarchic and therefore troublesome. So men said, go to now, let us make a king, that he may save us from one another and enable us to live *contra naturam*, *i.e.*, at peace

[1] *Discourse* I.

[2] *Advancement of Learning*. *Works*, I. pp. 216, 223, etc. "The doctrine of religion as well moral as mystical is not to be attained to but by inspiration and revelation from God," II. 19.

with one another. The "king" may be one or many. So long as there is a strong central authority to fulfil the desire of the people, each for his own good, and honour the contract they have made with it, all is well. So Hobbes, having taken a lower view of human nature than any of the theologians, calls in the help of the State to do what others left to the Gospel or to the Church. Men can only be made good and kept good by external restraints. They must be prevented by force from living a "natural" life. Naturalism, as represented by its first vigorous English exponent, says that "Nature" is not the authority in morals.

Cumberland, the Bishop of Peterborough, wished as a philosopher to argue from Nature, and is so far both empiricist and rationalist. He had a much more worthy view of human nature than Hobbes; and, to use the phraseology of John Smith, there were other mirrors besides that of the understanding and reason in which he was in the habit of seeing reflections of himself.

The Cambridge Platonists with one accord and consistently advocated the claims of Reason or "the candle of the Lord," but none of them gave to it the sole or even the chief authority. It was only a "candle," not the sun. "The eternal and immutable principles of morality," disclosed by this candle-light were to Cudworth only the laws of first inscription. They were an introduction to the moral universe, not an adequate description of it. The moral realm was to him, what Jesus called it, "a mystery." Into the mysteries of that Kingdom men could only be initiated by Jesus Christ. "The secret mysteries of the divine life, of a new creature, of Christ formed in our hearts, they cannot be written or spoken, neither can they be truly understood, except the soul itself be kindled from within, and awakened to the life of them."[1] They constituted the second course in moral philosophy. Benjamin Whichcote, another of the school, called them "the

[1] Tulloch, *Rational Theology in the Seventeenth Century*, II. 230.

truths of after-revelation,"[1] and, eloquently as he spoke of the laws written not on tables of stone, but so engraved in the constitution of man that he could not disobey them except to his own undoing, he speaks still more persuasively regarding the Ethics of the Gospel. So also Nathaniel Culverwell wished "to give to Reason the things that are Reason's, and unto Faith the things that are Faith's: to give Faith her full scope and latitude, and to give Reason also her just bounds and limits." "The place for Reason is at the gate of the Temple called Beautiful, and her honourable function to be a doorkeeper in the House of God. Faith alone can enter the holy of holies and pierce within the veil."[2] All these prominent members of the Cambridge school, Whichcote, Cudworth, Culverwell, and we have to add Henry More and John Smith himself, belong not to the rational group, but to those whom Smith placed last, "the metaphysical and contemplative men," who through the Gospel had been enabled "to shoot above their own logical or self-rational life" and enter upon the highest life of love. The moral universe is more to each of them than the natural order disclosed by Reason.

Locke.

In the earlier editions of the *Essay on the Human Understanding* Locke had expressed the opinion that ethics might be reduced to a science as rational as mathematics: but, though urged to draw up a treatise on morals, he never complied. "It is possible," says Professor James Gibson, "that Locke realised more fully the difficulties of the undertaking the more he thought about it."[3] His own previous philosophising really disqualified him for the task. Moreover, he thought that there was no need for Reason to

[1] *Glorious Evidence and Power of Divine Truth*, 522: Campagnac, *Christian Platonists.*

[2] *Discourse on the Light of Nature.*

[3] *Locke's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 158.

attempt to do what had already been so well done in the New Testament. "It would seem," he said, "by the little that has hitherto been done in it that it is too hard a task for unassisted Reason to establish morality in all its parts upon its true foundation with a clear and convincing light. . . . It is plain in fact that human reason unassisted failed men in its great and proper business of morality. It never from unquestionable principles, by clear deductions, made out the entire body of the law of nature. And he who shall collect all the moral rules of philosophers and compare them with those contained in the New Testament will find them to come short of the morality delivered by our Saviour and taught by His Apostles: a college made up for the most part of ignorant but inspired fishermen." [1]

So, a hundred and fifty years after the death of Luther, we find the most famous philosopher of his time in England preferring the ethics of the New Testament to anything which the unaided reason of man had elaborated. Reason had not yet succeeded in determining the natural basis of morals.

The Continental Philosophers.

If we pass from the English moralists to the greatest Continental philosophers in the seventeenth century, Grotius, Descartes, Malebranche, and Spinoza, we are confronted by a similar state of things. Except perhaps in the case of Spinoza, the light of Nature is not regarded as competent to explore the whole field of morals. Reservations are made or limitations imposed, which check the self-confidence of Reason.

Hugo Grotius, lawyer, statesman, historian, poet, critic, philosopher, and theologian, saw life from many points of view and escaped the narrowness, which in various degrees characterised the others. The world was for him more full of meaning than for Descartes, and he was never

[1] *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 8th ed. of *Works*, p. 87. Quoted by James Seth, *English Philosophers*, p. 116.

banished to that cold region of abstraction to which a brilliant, speculative talent consigned Spinoza. He inherited the Stoic-Ciceronian, that is, Mediæval view of Nature, and by his presentation of it in more modern form built up for himself an enduring reputation. Yet it was not the attempt to find in Nature a basis for international law that gave him the greatest satisfaction. The *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, says Mr W. S. M. Knight, "is the protest of a true believer and only incidentally of a jurist. His one dominating thought is religion—the Scriptures and the Church. His one ambition was to help forward the cause of religious peace by and through a reunited Church."[1]

In striking contrast with Grotius, with his broad human interests, stands DESCARTES, the father of modern philosophy. "Living among men as among the trees of the forest," and thinking so unworthily even of those trees as to imagine that the mysteries of their constitution could be unlocked by a mathematical formula, cutting himself loose also, as far as might be, from the knowledge and traditions of the past, he endeavoured to construct a new philosophy.

Such detachment, however useful it might prove to be in the region of pure speculation, was not likely to lead to valuable results in morals. There at least history and experience count for something. Writing to his royal patronesses Descartes tells them, that he can easily make a synthesis of all that is best in the ancient systems of ethics. But he does not go beyond them. He made no great contribution to moral philosophy; unless his psycho-physical basis of morals—his theory of what goes on in the pineal gland—can be so regarded. If there had been any specifically Christian elements in Descartes' idea of God he might easily have produced something better, for with him the concept "God" was of primary theoretical importance. There could be "no order, no law, no reason of truth and goodness," which did not depend upon God.

[1] *Grotius Society Publications*, No. 3, p. 22.

But Descartes did not construct either a theological or rational system of ethics. He probably had not sufficient knowledge of men, or interest in them, to do so. And his courage failed him. The man who at the end of his *Principles of Philosophy* submitted all his opinions to the authority of the Church, can hardly be claimed as an advocate of a purely rational or natural ethic.

Malebranche was still less inclined to advocate an independent ethic. Able metaphysician as he was, Malebranche felt that he could not trust in the light of Nature. "It is faith alone that can guide me and sustain me in my researches into the truths having reference to God, as the truths of metaphysics have";[1] and when he turned to morals he found the principles and power of morality in God rather than in man or Nature. He speaks of those "rare geniuses who believe themselves to have found in the love of self the true principles of natural morality."[2] But he is not one of them. He looks above man to see what man ought to do and to become. The eternal principles of truth and justice reside only in God. The Divine self-love is the guarantee of the immutable order of the moral universe, whereas man is so unjust that self-love is for him no safe guide. God is also good and compassionate, manifesting His love to men very specially in Jesus Christ, and "our love is the effect of His love."[3]

It is evident that here Malebranche wishes to base morality on the revelation of God in Jesus Christ rather than upon the natural order. But he had not sufficient faith in the Gospel or in himself to do so. He will not lay claim to any first-hand knowledge of the way of life in Jesus Christ. He just falls back on the authority of the Church. "The facts of religion" are, as he says, "decided dogmas." They are not facts of personal experience. He simply accepts them from the Church and calls them his own: "these are my experiences." As a member of the Church they are his, though at present he merely accepts

[1] *Ninth Dial.*, Ginsberg's Transl., p. 234. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 244.
[3] *Eighth Dial.*, *ibid.*, p. 222.

them on trust. "At present we do not feel our adoption in Jesus Christ"[1]—the silence of the Middle Ages becomes an actual confession of destitution in Malebranche—"our worth, our divinity. Partakers of the Divine nature, we do not know it; sitting with Him in the heavenly places we do not feel it."[2] And the reason why we do not feel the powers of the world to come and realise the Kingdom of God as a present experience is "because our life is hid with Christ in God." It is a strange reason to assign. Some of the mystics thought that they could experience the Kingdom of God without the mediation of Jesus Christ. It was reserved for Malebranche to suggest that it was because of our union with Jesus Christ that we were prevented from enjoying the Kingdom now. Malebranche was neither a genuine mystic claiming a real experience of the Divine, nor a pure idealist content with the contemplation of the Absolute. Still less was he a Humanist delighting in all that pertains to men; for, as Dr Ginsberg tells us, he confesses that he was "more moved by the observation of the ways of an insect than by the whole history of Greece and Rome."[3] But the days when men would turn to the insects to discover the principles of the moral life had not yet arrived. So Malebranche took his morality from the Church.

Spinoza believed neither in the Church nor in the Gospel. But he made two remarkable admissions, the first that the simple following of Scripture was sufficient for the great majority of mankind, and secondly, as was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, that by pure intuition Christ received information which was "not deducible from the foundations of our natural knowledge."[4] Spinoza would seem therefore to have acknowledged the incompleteness of all ethics, which rested merely upon Reason and Nature. Jesus Christ knew more than Reason and Nature can tell us.

The admiration which Spinoza felt for Jesus will hardly,

[1] *Fourteenth Dial., ibid.*, p. 355. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 360. [3] p. 18.
[4] *Tractatus Politicus*, XIV. 1; also Kellett, *E.R.E.*, Vol. 11, p. 782.

I think, be disputed. James Martineau called it "profound veneration"; and closed his account of Spinoza with the words: "Nor is it wonderful that on that gracious figure, standing so clear of all that had alienated him from the Synagogue, yet intent on a divine perfecting of life, his eyes should rest with a strange repose."[1] The wonder, indeed, is not in the admiration, but in the "strange" repose; for the Jesus of history is more than the philosopher's ideal, more than an object of contemplation. But, to Spinoza, Jesus was apparently only this. He has no use for the superior knowledge of Jesus. His attitude is simply one of "repose." He prefers to walk by the light of Nature.

And by the light of Nature Spinoza meant reflection on the universe as determined by himself. It is not simply that he turns away from the Jesus of history. He turns away from history also, and retires into his self-chosen world of abstract thought. Sublimely indifferent to facts or events, natural and supernatural, he evolves from his own inner consciousness a world of reality and calls it "Nature."

His motive for doing so was that he might find rest unto his soul. His speculations had a practical purpose. He calls them "*Ethica*." By clearer knowledge he wished to gain more perfect control over emotion and passion. He is a conspicuous example of the narrow, self-centred, but not unkindly philosophic moralist. His morals were not of the Christian type, as we see still more clearly, when entering the field of political debate he advocates the theory that might is right. Whether they were philosophical or not depends on the meaning we wish to put into that word. If the philosopher is one who desires to face all the facts of life and live in the largest, fullest world of reality, Spinoza has little claim to be considered a great philosopher. He had little imagination, little faith, and if we may judge from his cast-iron theory of the universe, little sense of humour. But within the narrow limits of

[1] *A Study of Spinoza*, p. 371.

his rigidly determined and deterministic universe he tried to acquit himself nobly.

It is curious how the epithet "God-intoxicated" has been connected and remained connected with Spinoza's name. The one thing which he himself desired was that he should not be intoxicated with anything. The region of calm and rational contemplation in which he wished to live was so remote from all ideas of intoxication, that it seems an act of cruel irony to use the word in connection with him. Yet it may be truer than Spinoza himself would have cared to admit. For the God of Spinoza was not the Christian's God, a personal presence controlling as well as inspiring the worshipper, but rather an idea that possessed him. Ideas may intoxicate a man. It is because the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is so much more than an idea, or scheme, or fact of Nature, that the Christian remains sober in his thinking. Another Jew, who might fitly be described as God-intoxicated, because of the power which an idea of God had upon him, met with Jesus Christ and learned that religion was something infinitely more than devotion to an idea. It was obedience to a Person. Intoxicated by his own thoughts of God and his own enthusiasm for an ideal, Saul of Tarsus was brought to truth and sobriety by the realisation of what God thought of him, and of what God had done for him. For Spinoza God remained an object of contemplation: that, and nothing more. It would not, I think, be correct to speak of him as a Theist, though one should speak with reserve in the case of one who, as Edward Caird said: "Often fluctuates between principles radically irreconcilable," and "seems to re-assert at the close of his speculations what he had denied at the beginning."[1] Those, it seems to me, are right who maintain that by "God" Spinoza meant no more than "Nature," and by "Nature" a rigidly determined and impersonal order. Personality, moral qualities, will, purpose, even intellect, are mere metaphors as applied to Spinoza's God. "Nature" is

[1] *Spinoza*, p. 303.

non-moral. To live according to Nature is therefore for Spinoza to transcend morality and act in a non-moral way. Although alone among the great philosophers of the seventeenth century he appears to have been content with an ethic which he himself constructed, he found no true basis for morality in the natural order. A man cannot act otherwise than he does act. His conduct is determined by his place in the non-moral system of Nature. Whether he tell a lie or die a martyr for the truth, he is acting naturally. He can do no otherwise.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ETHICS OF NATURE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE problem of the connection between morality and Nature, which was left unsolved by seventeenth-century rationalism, was taken up again in the eighteenth, and presented in a variety of forms in England, France, and Germany.

The English Moralists.

Like the Cambridge Platonists, Berkeley, our greatest metaphysician, regarded philosophy as the handmaid of theology, concluding *The Principles of Human Knowledge* with the avowal that it was written the better to dispose his readers " to reverence and embrace the salutary truths of the Gospel, which to know and practise is the highest perfection of human nature." For him the Gospel was the foundation of the highest morality. He comes forward as an advocate of the Christian way of life, seeking to remove one obstacle to its acceptance by thinking men, not as professing a new theory of morals. The question whether Berkeley's idealism is competent to support a system of morals, Christian or otherwise, is an interesting one for philosophers to discuss, but it was not one proposed by Berkeley himself. He had no thought of laying any other foundation for morals than that which had been laid. What he did attempt to do was to disabuse men's minds of a prejudice against the Christian view, a prejudice accentuated by the Deists, who believed that, having banished God from the world, they could give a rational account of " Nature."

Berkeley saw that the Deist view of the transcendence of God and their hypostatising of "Nature" were alike fatal to Christian morality. God and "Nature" are not independent. "Nature" has no meaning apart from God. "If by Nature is meant some being distinct from God, as well as from the laws of Nature and things perceived by sense, I must confess that the word is to me an empty sound, without any intelligible meaning annexed to it. Nature in this acceptation is a vain chimera introduced by those heathens who had no just notions of the omnipotence and infinite perfection of God."[1]

But the Deists and many others who came under the influence of the Enlightenment were not prepared to acquiesce in this subordination or sublimation of "Nature." God they regarded as far away from the world He had once created, but "Nature" was ever present. She at least seemed very real, accessible, and knowable. So in the vanity of their minds the men of the eighteenth century for the most part let go the substance and rejoiced in the shadow. The phantom goddess remained on her imaginary pedestal and men bowed the knee to her.

It is curious what a strong fascination the idea of "Nature" had for the eighteenth century. Religion and morality were subordinated to it. The chief recommendation and best guarantee of religion was that it was natural. Four years before the opening of the century John Toland had endeavoured to show that there was nothing mysterious about Christianity; and in 1730 Matthew Tindal revealed the thoughts which were in many minds, when he maintained that Christianity was simply a republication of "Natural" religion and as old as Creation. This idea of Christianity as merely a restatement of the principles of Nature led some of the Deists into a very uncritical and arbitrary method of treating the New Testament records, Lord

[1] *Principles*, p. 135.

Bolingbroke, for example, regarding the Pauline form of Christianity as spurious and that of Jesus Christ Himself as a complete and plain system of natural religion. Such a way of thinking led not only to the impoverishment of Christianity but to the vulgarising of Nature. Minds that were insensitive to the mystery of the Christian religion soon lost the sense of the mystery of Nature. Everything became mean and commonplace. The religion of Jesus was misinterpreted, and morality was kept within the limits of Nature as arbitrarily defined. Men spoke of "Nature" as though they knew all about her. Even a man so far removed from the Deists as the Puritan Baxter had anticipated this way of regarding Nature, which became so common in the eighteenth century. The truths of natural religion, he held, were better established than those of revealed religion. Nature was something easily apprehended and a religion based upon it sure and immutable.

This confident and familiar attitude to the mysteries of Nature was due mainly to that "little learning," which Alexander Pope, one of the best representatives of a superficial age, declared was "a dangerous thing." Men thought they knew so much and really knew so little. Lord Morley's picture of "very incompetent ladies and gentlemen at convivial supper parties discussing and settling with complete assurance the conditions of primitive man,"[1] was true of English as well as of French society. It admirably describes the spirit of the age.

With that spirit the philosophers, who turned their attention to ethics, were in agreement. They start from the idea of Nature, either the nature of things or the nature of man, primitive or civilised.

The attempt to deduce morality from the nature of things took two very similar forms, the one the more logical and the other the more mathematical. Wollaston may be taken as an example of the first type, and Samuel

[1] *Rousseau*, p. 155.

Clarke of the second. To Wollaston immoral conduct was a violation of the laws of thought. It was logical inconsistency or untruthfulness, and as Nature was a rational order such conduct was unnatural. It was unnatural for a man to injure his brother, because it was a practical denial of the truth, that he was his brother. It is easy enough to parody this reduction of all unnatural conduct to the vice of lying; and many generations of College students have smiled at Leslie Stephen's banter: "Thirty years of profound meditation had convinced Wollaston that the reason why a man should abstain from breaking his wife's head was that it was a way of denying that she was his wife."[1] But Plato and the Stoics would perhaps have found a little more in Wollaston's contention than Leslie Stephen seems to have done, and they would probably have changed the illustration.

Samuel Clarke, whom Wollaston looked up to as a teacher, thought of natural conduct after the analogy of mathematics. He held that just as the mind naturally gave its assent to the truths of geometry so it would discern right and wrong in actions. Morality was involved in the very nature of things. But "the nature of things" is a very vague phrase, and as Sir James Macintosh pointed out, a criminal may have regard to the natural relations of things in the prosecution of his base designs. To act morally is to act in accordance with a moral and not merely natural scheme of things. And this throws us back again upon the initial questions, whether there is a moral scheme of things as contrasted with the natural, and wherein the distinction consists. The abstract universe of the mathematician or of the logician can never reveal to us the presence, still less the meaning, of moral facts. Moral relations are not merely quantitative, and good conduct is something more than correct thinking. "It is quite impossible," as Selby-Bigge said, "to deduce a moral category from any

[1] *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, I. p. 130

consideration of the nature of things." [1] The intellectualists of the eighteenth century failed to do this; and the wiser among them, like Clarke, saw that thinking was not enough, and that morality was something more than the acknowledgment of true propositions. In mathematics the mind necessarily and inevitably gives its assent to truth, but it is otherwise in morals. The will may withhold its assent and stultify the best efforts of the intellect. Men had therefore to recognise that the will had an important place in ethics, and the way was prepared for the advent of a philosopher who would remove morals from the sphere of Nature considered as a logical or mathematical system.

But another line had yet to be explored. Appeal was made to Nature in a second sense, not as the general scheme of things, but as the particular nature of man. "The proper study of mankind is man." Shaftesbury and Butler may be selected as illustrating this appeal to human nature.

In opposition to Hobbes both regarded the nature of man as essentially social and the different affections or faculties as constituting a system, in the one case of a more sentimental and in the other of a more rational order. Both sought for the justification of the moral life within the constitution of man.

Butler's scheme in particular has been specially esteemed, because of the more thorough way in which he worked out the idea of human nature as a system with a hierarchy of powers at the head of which stands conscience. It is a permanent contribution to the psychology of ethics. On its own ground it has indeed sometimes been felt to be inadequate, and Butler's admirers have pointed out the apparent discrepancy between his varying accounts of self-love and conscience in the *Sermons* and in the *Dissertation on Virtue*. As a reply to the sensationalistic and selfish view of human nature propounded by Hobbes it has been held in the highest esteem. The presence

[1] *British Moralists*, p. xxii.

of the reflective principle or conscience at the head of the hierarchy seems to remove man further from the merely animal, and so from Nature in a lower and more restricted sense. But the question is, how are we to understand Butler's conception of Nature? When he speaks of human nature and bases the fact of obligation upon its constitution — "your obligation to obey is that it is a law of your nature"[1] — does he rise above a purely naturalistic conception? The sanctions of duty are found within the natural order. This may be good Stoic teaching, but is it Christian? A man owes it to himself to be virtuous. But if a man owes it to himself, may he not also absolve himself. Can we find a sufficiently strong sanction for duty in the nature of man considered as an individual, even though that individual may be a most benevolent, prudent, and conscientious person? The moral philosophy of Butler remains throughout the *Sermons* individualistic and self-centred.

No doubt Butler's aim was to meet the Deists and natural philosophers on their own ground; but unfortunately in going down into that arena of controversy he left the only region in which the principles of morality can be adequately and permanently defended. From the point of view of Christian ethics Butler is a great disappointment. If anyone in the eighteenth century could have vindicated the true foundations of Christian morality, he was the man marked out by his gifts and vocation for such a task. He did not, however, attempt it. He preferred to adopt the prevalent habit of appealing to Nature. He chose to corrupt a good Pauline text by leaving out the most significant words and interpreting the remainder in a Stoical and non-Christian sense. That text was the great passage in the Epistle to the Romans in which the Apostle speaks of the Christian community as one body in Christ:[2] "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we being many are one body in Christ and every one members one of

[1] *Sermon* III.

[2] Rom. xii. 4 and 5.

another." Although the Apostle Paul had deliberately raised the metaphor of the body and its members above its old heathen application to a natural order of society on to a supernatural and truly personal level, Butler had the temerity to reduce it again to its heathen sense by eliminating the words "in Christ." He further violated his text by applying it in its truncated form to the psychology of the individual man. It is perhaps the most flagrantly perverse transformation of a text that a really great preacher was ever guilty of effecting. There is no presentation in Butler's sermons of a supernatural or Christian Ethic.

Butler's individualism is all too evident. He starts with the individual man, and not the social organism, still less with the New Testament conception of the Kingdom of God. In the *Analogy* and elsewhere there are indications of what Butler might have done, if he had been able to overcome his reluctance to seek either in metaphysics or theology a foundation for morals. He knew that for those who accepted the facts of revelation there was another way. But he hesitates even to suggest the Christian solution. "The natural and moral constitution and government of the world," he says, "are so connected as to make up together but one scheme," of which the moral appears to be the dominant half. But it is a matter of probability rather than of demonstration, of inference rather than of faith, and Butler shrinks from the full implications of his Christian beliefs. His own thought remains infected by the Deism against which he was anxious to make a protest. And when he turns to the facts of the Christian revelation, it is not to show how they transfigure the natural and moral scheme of the universe, but simply to point out how the two orders, the revealed and the natural, are alike in the difficulties they present.

Nature was to Butler a system of things imperfectly understood. It was only a fragment that we could see. He was thus prevented from making Nature in a more

general sense our authority in morals. And even human nature, though so admirably adapted for the moral life, is a scheme that will not work. Conscience has authority, but it has not power. Butler saw, what Clarke also recognised, but what the more complacent and optimistic Shaftesbury did not so clearly see, that while theoretically there might be perfect harmony, practically there was discord. The psychology of the natural man is not an adequate foundation for morals.

When we turn to Hume, we have a different treatment of Nature. All that we know is immediate impression. The connections of things, whether outside or within the mind, can never be facts of experience. Cause and effect are simply names, which we invent to describe regular sequences. They are outside of experience. If there should be any such thing as an order of Nature, it can never be mirrored in experience. To act according to Nature is simply to obey the impulse of the moment. That is the only thing of which we can be sure.

And as there is no known order or system called Nature, so there is no continuous and permanent ego, no self which has the experiences. The mind is simply a series of ideas or impressions. We have no knowledge of anything that holds them together, or of any one of whom they may be said to be the property.

And so likewise there are no immutable principles of morality. Morality is a matter of individual sensibility and not of demonstration or reason. "There has been an opinion very industriously propagated by certain philosophers that morality is susceptible of demonstration," said Hume; "and though no one has ever been able to advance a single step in those demonstrations yet 'tis taken for granted that this science may be brought to an equal certainty with geometry or algebra."[1] As against these philosophers, Hume thought that there could be no general principles established. Let each man take his own individual sentiment or preference of feeling as his

[1] *Treatise*, III. l. 1.

guide.[1] So Hume destroyed at one stroke a rational conception of Nature, of man, and of morals.

For doing this Hume has been held worthy of the greatest praise. His work has been described as an "immortal service." He is regarded as one of the liberators of mankind, and so thoroughly did he do his work that since Hume "there is no ecclesiastical ethics worth discussing." It is worth while to pause a moment to ask what this may mean. The words quoted are those of Professor T. C. Hall. More fully quoted, they are as follows: "But Hume rendered immortal service in once and for all compelling ethics to leave its own scholastic authoritative basis, and seek its basis in faith's view of the world as rational and good, while it confesses that it cannot be demonstrated; and to seek its content in an examination of the actual experience of men with social utility as the measure at hand for the empiric testing of special lines of conduct."[2]

Now the work of destruction is sometimes necessary. The iconoclasts may perform a useful function in the salvation of mankind intellectually and morally. In that sense Voltaire's influence was not altogether bad, nor was Hume's, nor was that of any other man, who has caused any house of lies to fall, or any vain confidence to fail.

But there is something more to be said for "the old scholastic authoritative basis" than seems to be implied in this pæan over its demolition. It is possible on Hume's own principles of utility and experience to say much for it. It has been contended in these pages that, as compared with the Ethics of the Gospel, the ethics of scholasticism were defective. But by virtue of the elements of Christian truth which they contained they did contribute something to the general happiness. They were a second best. Nor were they altogether remote from experience. The antithesis between dogma and experience was often real enough; but the creeds and formularies of

[1] *Treatise*, I. 2, 7, etc.

[2] *Hist. of Ethics within Organised Christianity*, pp. 464–7.

the Church to a considerable extent sprang out of Christian experience. The scholastics and the monks utilised such experience of Divine things as was given to them, and even official Catholicism had sometimes to reckon with it. The appeal to experience was not a discovery of Hume.

Hume's work, on the contrary, was to impoverish rather than exalt experience. He wronged it in more ways than one. To begin with, he overworked it. Induction and deduction must proceed hand in hand even in physical science. As Hobbes said : " Experience concludeth nothing universally." The interpretation of experience is as important as the experience itself. And Hume enormously limited the sphere of experience. His analytic method split up the concrete reality of the world into isolated fragments, and the different phases of consciousness into disconnected items. A man could only have experience of things, not of their relations, and nothing but the momentary experience of the individual had any validity. There was no experience of self, of the world, or of God. To speak of Hume, as is so commonly done, as a vindicator of the rights of experience strikes one as fantastic. What he did was to reduce it to mere momentary sentience. This does not seem to me to be an improvement even on scholasticism.

Nor do I see how we can give Hume much credit for providing another basis for ethics in the conception of the world as rational and good. Hume had no such conception of the world himself. He could not prove the validity of the idea. He could not even propose it for the acceptance of faith. His work was negative. He made it impossible for those who followed him to regard the life according to Nature as a rational life. He dissolved Nature and morals, and made the knowledge of God impossible.

The French Philosophers.

But it was in France that the idea of the life according to Nature, human or less than human, received the most passionate acceptance. For this there were historical as well as temperamental causes. In England, for example, the Reformation had given the Bible to the people, and the Puritan movement had applied its teaching to individual and national life much more thoroughly than had been the case in France. In the latter country there was little to break the force of the collision between ecclesiastical institutions which had lost touch both with the Gospel and Nature, and men obsessed with the idea of natural rights and believing that Reason was on their side. Voltaire, Rousseau and the Encyclopædists as Helvetius, Lamettrie, Diderot and d'Holbach represented different phases of the revolt against ecclesiastical ethics and of the desired return to the ethics of Nature; and all alike thought that Reason was their guide. Voltaire did not approve of the crass materialism and atheism of Diderot and his coadjutors, but recognised the value of a belief in God at least for the common man: nevertheless he wished to base morality not on religion, but on the decisions of Reason, which he supposed were the same in all ages and in every man. Rousseau, though he was a sentimentalist through and through, declared that his principles were not founded on the authority of poets, but arose out of the nature of things and were grounded in Reason.[1] The Encyclopædists also, in rejecting the supersensuous and reducing man to a machine, thought they had rational justification in the philosophy of Condillac. The life according to Nature was for all of them a life determined by Reason.

As in England so in France, sometimes the human interest predominated, sometimes the physical; occasionally, as in Rousseau, the superphysical makes its presence felt. But France in the eighteenth century had neither

[1] *Centr. Soc.*, I. 4.

metaphysicians nor theologians to keep open the paths into the regions beyond time and sense. Instead, she has the unenviable distinction of having produced a thoroughly materialistic scheme of Nature. Notwithstanding Locke's sensationalism and Hume's negations, no book comparable with *La Système de la Nature* arose on English soil. Lord Bolingbroke's superficial writings were highly esteemed in fashionable circles, but if any English author of repute had ventured to write the fierce diatribes of d'Holbach, ending with the words, " Let us recognise the plain truth, that it is these supernatural ideas that have obscured morality, corrupted politics, hindered the advance of the sciences, and extinguished happiness and peace even in the very heart of man," [1] his words would have appeared ridiculous, not simply to the readers of Bacon and Locke and Isaac Newton and Berkeley and Butler, but to tens of thousands who had witnessed the results of the evangelical revival in which Whitefield and the Wesleys took so active a part.

Rousseau was the mystic of the movement, notwithstanding his claims to be following Reason—the mystic of Nature, revelling in it and rebelling against its limitations. " Then with easier pace," he wrote to Malesherbes, " I went in search of some wild and desert spot in the forest, where there was nothing to show the hand of man, or to speak of servitude and domination. . . . From the surface of the earth I raised my ideas to all the existences in nature, to the universal system of things, to the incomprehensible Being who embraces all. . . . I believe that, if I had unveiled all the mysteries of nature, I should have found myself in a less delicious situation than that bewildering ecstasy to which my mind so unreservedly delivered itself, and which sometimes transported me until I cried out, 'O mighty Being! O mighty Being!' without power of any other word or thought." [2]

But Rousseau had also an intense feeling for human

[1] J. Morley's *Diderot*, p. 370.
[2] Morley, *Rousseau*, I. pp. 239–241.

nature, not always found among the mystics. In spite of much that was ignoble in his own character, he had a wide sympathy and a quick sensitiveness to injustice and oppression. According to his mood he peopled the solitudes of the wilderness with imaginary human beings, or called up from the dreamy past the picture of the noble savage unspoiled by the conventions and wrongs of civilised life, or sought to devise some form of society more capable of satisfying the social instincts of mankind. He wished men to return to the life of Nature, but it was not to Nature as Hobbes conceived it. Man was a social being. The life according to Nature was a life full of human interests and made happy by human affection. Kant, in so many ways the antithesis of Rousseau, acknowledged his indebtedness to the humanitarian teaching of the fervid and erratic Frenchman.

Unfortunately, as Maine de Biran pointed out, Voltaire, Rousseau, and the other French philosophers of the eighteenth century did not understand man.[1] They lacked the knowledge, which Pascal had, of the contradictory and irrational elements in human nature. They saw neither the heights nor the depths, neither the possibilities of good nor of evil, latent in man. Voltaire's life-long repugnance to the *Pensées* of Pascal is as characteristic of the man as his sincere admiration for *Les Lettres à un Provincial*. He could appreciate the inimitable satire of Jesuit morality, but he could not bear to look into his own heart, the universal heart of mankind, and witness the demolition of his own fine theories regarding the light of Reason and the order of Nature.

The German Moralists.

Of the German philosophers the two greatest, one belonging to the first half and the other to the latter half of the century, were Leibnitz and Kant.

Leibnitz lived through the second half of the previous

[1] *Maine de Biran*, Monbrun, p. 168.

century, but three of his most important works were published in 1710 and 1714. In spirit too he belongs to the century in which Reason became self-confident, and the happiness of man was regarded as springing from its enlightening influence. Was Leibnitz then successful in producing a rational scheme of morals ?

On the contrary, if we may accept the opinion of a distinguished modern logician, the Ethic of Leibnitz is "a mass of inconsistencies," and "the ethics to which he was entitled was very similar to Spinoza's: it has the same fallacies and similar consequences."[1]

This would be rather discouraging, if one wished to come forward as an advocate of rationalism. When two thinkers, as brilliant as Spinoza and Leibnitz, are unable to give logical consistency to their thoughts on moral subjects, the common man may well hesitate to believe the experts or place implicit confidence in Reason. And, unhappily, if Mr Bertrand Russell's opinion is correct, the mistakes in logic were in part at least due in the case of Leibnitz to moral perversity. It is alleged, that he wrote to please his patrons, and not in the interests of truth. Charges such as this, whether true or false, remind us that philosophers are but men of like passions with ourselves, and their systems the product of other factors than the purely rational one. Leibnitz was not the first, if indeed there is any truth in the insinuation, nor the last of the philosophers to be influenced consciously or unconsciously by unphilosophical motives.

Our interest in the reputed failure of Leibnitz in the sphere of ethics does not arise, however, so much from its recoil on rationalism as from its bearing on Christian ethics. Leibnitz borrowed theological terms and New Testament phrases to describe a natural ethic or one within the bounds of pure reason. And he failed, as every one must fail who empties New Testament words of their meaning by applying them in a quite different connection. We may leave to others to decide how much more Leibnitz

[1] B. Russell, *Philosophy of Leibnitz*, pp. 191, 202.

meant by "God" than did Spinoza. They certainly approach the question from opposite sides. But extremes sometimes meet. Deism and pantheism, the one by banishing the Deity from the world, the other by stripping Him of all intelligible attributes, may arrive at a very similar notion of the Absolute. But neither in Spinoza nor even in Leibnitz do we find that full and concrete conception of God, which is implied in the Christian doctrine of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Leibnitz substitutes the "natural" fatherhood of God for the New Testament conception, pre-established harmony for predestination, and the freedom of the natural man for the liberty of the children of God.

The divergence from Christian doctrine is well seen in his famous conception of the City of God or the realm of Grace.

This community consists of the totality of all spirits, that is, intelligent beings, who in virtue of the reason God has given them have the power of reflecting His image. Through this original endowment all men are raised above the world of Nature of which God is the Architect, and hold fellowship with Him as Father or most perfect Monarch of a most perfect State, each mind being like a small divinity in its own sphere, at once a monarch and a free subject in a heavenly kingdom. This City of God, this truly universal monarchy, is a moral world in the natural world, and is the most exalted and the most Divine among the works of God. In it the world of Nature or mechanism finds its perfection, and the two together constitute a perfect whole, because before all time God established between them a perfect harmony.[1]

This reads like a parody of the New Testament conception of the Kingdom of God, and the phraseology gives point to Nietzsche's remark, that the Protestant clergyman was the grandfather of German philosophy. The grandchild, however, though it may have some of the

[1] *Theod.*, 62, 146; *Principles of Nat. and Grace*, 15. *Monodol.*, 84. Latta's *Leibnitz*, especially pp. 268, 269.

bodily features, has little of the character of the grandsire. According to Leibnitz when God created the world and gave to man dominion over the beasts of the field, the Kingdom of Heaven had come, the City had already been established, and the Grace of God found its highest manifestation. The world was and has remained the most perfect of all worlds. The relations between man and the lower creatures are ideally perfect: the relation between all intelligent beings and God most admirable. If men sin, they suffer for it in mind and body. If they do well they are rewarded. In short, there is as much virtue and happiness as is possible.

And the spring of all man's actions is self-love. Thou shalt love thyself with all thy mind, then shalt thou see clearly thy brother's need. Justice is the charity of the wise man. Like the old Gnostics, Leibnitz believed that knowledge was the one thing needful to bring forth the image of God, which was hidden in the soul. "Enlighten thyself, and have a care for the enlightenment of thy fellows, so shall you all be happy." That, says Windelband, is "the philosophy professed by the whole eighteenth century in Germany." [1]

Passing over the names of Wolf and others, we come to Kant, the most distinguished of all the philosophers who have sought to establish morality on a merely rational basis. This he did in opposition not only to the English and French philosophers who sought for the test of truth in sensible experience, but also to the rationalists who held that moral truths were capable of mathematical demonstration. Ethics was for Kant the domain of the Practical Reason, which transcends the world of time and sense and mathematical measurements—a world of freedom, where men were not indeed without law, but under law to reason.

Though, like Leibnitz, Kant was influenced by some of the ideas of Protestant theology, he nevertheless did not

[1] *Geschichte der neuren Philosophie*, I. p. 477, quoted by Latta, p. 149.

create a Protestant ethic, but turned the evangelical ethics of Luther and Calvin into a philosophical system with the specifically Christian elements left out.

For Jesus Christ as a moral teacher Kant had sincere admiration. It was the teaching of the Gospel that first "by the purity of its moral principle and at the same time by its suitability to the limitations of finite beings brought all the good conduct of man under the discipline of duty plainly set before their eyes."[1] Jesus Christ was, in Kant's opinion, free from all moral fanaticism, the exponent of a morality based on the Practical Reason, the first of the Illuminati, the Revealer of the way of life.

In his insistence on the rights of human personality, in his individualism, in his contention that all moral principles are of universal application, above all in his reverence for duty, Kant like Seneca has seemed to many Christians "often one of us."

In his view of human nature also Kant came nearer to the Christian doctrine than Leibnitz with his one-sided emphasis on natural goodness. The will of man—and Kant held that the only good thing in the universe was a good will—was corrupt. As decidedly as Clarke or Butler he insists on the discord caused by sin. Just as Seneca was constrained in spite of his Stoicism to speak of the need of a hand outstretched to save man, so Kant in spite of his emphasis on the autonomy of the will was also conscious of the moral impotence of man.

More particularly, considering the importance of it for his own philosophy, Kant's assertion of the freedom of the will from physical causation, has seemed a point of contact with Christian philosophy, or at least one considerable step thereto. Man is more than Nature as thus determined.

And yet, in spite of resemblances, the ethics of Kant are not the Ethics of the Gospel. The view of Professor Abbott that Kant "accepts the whole moral and spiritual teaching of the New Testament" is not borne out by the evidence.

[1] *Analytic*, 214, Abbott, p. 178.

The whole moral and spiritual teaching of the New Testament is centred in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which to Kant were things indifferent. The teaching cannot be divorced from the facts, nor understood without them. They are an integral part of it. Jesus taught by what He did as well as by what He said, and the moral teaching of the Apostles rests upon the Cross. The abstract theoretical universe of Kant is not the universe of the New Testament. Kant substituted for the Apostolic idea of the Kingdom of God a Realm of Ends, and for the knowledge of God and the obedience of faith the autonomy of the Practical Reason or will. He held that men were evil because they were irrational rather than because they were ungodly, and he did not show how the reformation, which he saw to be desirable, could be achieved. God, as supersensible, could not be manifested in experience, and therefore there could be no knowledge of redeeming grace. The principles of morality are independent of the will of God, and the Divine Being is little more than a logical device to make the attainment of the Highest Good possible. Man remains at the centre of the scheme of things. It is his reason rather than God's will that is the ultimate fact. Religion is the practical recognition of the Divine origin of a moral law which a man has determined for himself. He does not receive it from God as an essential part of an actual experience of the Divine, but uses it as an isolated datum from which to infer the existence of God. The Being of God is for Kant secondary to the moral law as determined by the Practical Reason, and neither is an object of experience, but they are ideas of the reason.[1]

Apart altogether from Kant's indifference to the idea of a redemption historically achieved, and to the possibility of the communion of the soul with God through Jesus

[1] Kant's version of the nineteenth Psalm—"The starry heavens above, the moral law within"—and his commentary thereon should be compared with the original, if we would see the difference between a merely philosophical and a religious view of the world.

Christ, his view of the relation of ethics and religion is fundamentally different from "the moral and spiritual teaching of the New Testament." In the New Testament the existence of God and His action on the minds and wills of men are the primary facts. He is a Living God coming to men in Jesus Christ in the fullness of His divinely-human personality, appealing not to reason alone, whether theoretical or practical, but to the whole man. Kant regarded a love in which there was any element of sensibility or tenderness as pathological. It is quite certain that every writer in the New Testament would have regarded Kant's cold intellectual love as less than Christian. The action of a Living Personal God can never be merely rational, for He is more not less than man.

The writers of the New Testament do not detach religion from morality, and then link them together in the dexterous but not very dignified manner of Kant. That would have been bad psychology, as well as bad manners. It would have been bad religion. Religion is the larger and more inclusive term, an experience in which morality is already involved. Men cannot act upon their fellow-men without acting upon God, and men cannot act for the benefit of men without the help of God. There has never been any debased type of religion which did not imply moral relations of some kind. And there has never been any sort of morality, which had not a religious significance, however faulty. Man is not religious with one part of his nature and moral with another. God and man are not two isolated existences towards which a man may alternately or exclusively direct his action. And this is specially true in the case of the Christian religion, where we see the moral and the spiritual interpenetrating one another in their purest and completest forms. The moral and spiritual constitute in Jesus Christ one perfect and inseparable whole. The antithesis which Kant institutes between the knowledge and will of God on the one hand and the autonomy of the practical reason

on the other, as the foundation of the principles of morality, is from the Christian standpoint a purely arbitrary and illusive one. It is only through participation in the knowledge of God and through co-operation with His will, according to the New Testament writers, that the practical reason can function at all in the way Kant suggests. "If the Son shall make you free, then are ye free indeed."

From the Christian point of view Kant did not succeed, by universalising the maxims of the practical reason, in transcending the old Ptolemaic idea of the universe. Man still remains the centre of the world of morals. That world may have seemed to Kant an infinitely larger one than it did to some of his predecessors, but its centre is the same. It is self as a rational being, not God as the giver of reason and the liberator of the human will. God is useful as a theoretical guarantee, that if man follows the laws of reason, he will attain the Highest Good. He is not Himself that Highest Good.

Kant's view of Nature is also different from the New Testament doctrine: though it is a great advance on the materialistic ideas of the French School. The most inappropriate thing which could be said of the Kantian Ethic would be that it was "naturalistic." It certainly was not naturalistic in the narrow modern sense of the word. It was the great merit of Kant that he vindicated the rights of free personality over against a rigidly-determined system of Nature. Man as a moral being was above the sensible system of Nature. He belonged to the supersensible or rational system of Nature, the archetypal world (*natura archetypa*) as opposed to the ectypal world (*natura ectypa*). His acts become events in a causally-conditioned sensible world, but he himself in the moment of acting is above it. He is a free agent and not the cause of his own acts, for then he would also be an effect. He is a law-giver, and wills so to act that the maxims of his actions may become by his will a universal law of Nature. His will is designed by Nature to give laws to Nature. Taking this extended

use of the word, man belongs to the general scheme of Nature.

This realm of ends or archetypal world, like Leibnitz's City of God, is not the New Testament idea of the Kingdom of God, and instructive contrasts might be drawn between Kant's idea of the archetypal world and that presented in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and also between Kant's unknowable and empty world of things in themselves and the Apostle Paul's conception of the *Pleroma*. The latter is the only possible foundation for an ethic truly Copernican. Jesus Christ is the centre of the moral universe, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.[1]

Among the other great lights which arose in the German firmament none was greater than Goethe; and this survey of what was meant by the life according to Nature may appropriately close with his opinion. Endowed with a vividness of imagination and exuberance of sentiment greater than Rousseau's, he possessed a sense of the importance of self-discipline lacking in the Frenchman. In some ways, especially in his feeling for the harmonies of Nature, he resembled the English Shaftesbury. But his true lineage, so far as Genius may establish connections with the past, was through Spinoza back to the Italian poet-philosopher Bruno.

Interested in natural science, Goethe expressed to Schiller his dissatisfaction with its analytic methods. It seemed to him that there was a better way of appreciating the meanings of Nature. It ought not to be split up into sections and discussed piecemeal. It was alive and active, "expanding from the whole into the parts." To dissect was to destroy, and post-mortems were not to Goethe's liking.

[1] The abstract character of Kant's Ethics has often been noted. The obvious danger of morality "running to seed along ego-centric lines" has again been pointed out by J. W. Scott, who finds "in the sense of moving with the universe" a possible corrective (*Kant on the Moral Life*, p. 171). But how are we to interpret this phrase in order that we may find in it the essence of moral activity?

So he revived Bruno's intuitive apprehension of Nature as a living unity with emphasis on the idea of evolution. And the whole is immanent in God.

> No, such a God my worship may not win,
> Who lets the world about His finger spin,
> A thing extern : my God must rule within,
> And whom I own for Father, God, Creator,
> Holds nature in Himself, Himself in nature :
> And in His kindly arms embraced, the whole
> Doth live and move by His pervading soul.[1]

To live according to Nature, as so conceived, was for Goethe by wise self-culture to open all the channels through which the immanent life of the universe might "expand from the whole into the parts." This meant much more than mere self-realisation by the development of individual powers and their harmonious co-ordination within the individual himself. It meant sharing in the life of the whole, a whole which was constantly growing and developing. Only mankind as a whole was the perfect man. By struggle and endurance, by work and by play, but especially by love, men might enter into a life much larger than their own, a life which was life indeed.

> Counsel and guidance you ask, try this and the other,
> Living will teach you to live better than preacher or book.
> But that which bridges over the biggest gap
> Is love, whose charm binds topmost heaven to earth.[2]

But this as Haering[3] and others have pointed out, is not the only note struck by Goethe. The man of genius is never merely a light-hearted optimist. Doubts as to the actuality of human progress and the completeness of the redemption gained by mere self-effort and the endurance of a cross were forced upon the seer by the facts of life. Participation in the richest life of the universe is not primarily a human achievement,

[1] Blackie's translation in *Selections from Goethe*.
[2] *Ibid.* [3] *Christian Ethics*, p. 102.

but the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. To the mysteries of the new creation Goethe cannot introduce us. But with him we are already passing from the easy optimism of the eighteenth century to the pessimism of the nineteenth, from Pope's light-hearted

> For me kind nature wakes her genial power
> Suckles each herb and spreads out every flower,

to Tennyson's

> Are God and Nature then at strife,
> That Nature lends such evil dreams ?

What is this " Nature " of which the eighteenth century in particular was so enamoured ?

CHAPTER XIV

THE ETHICS OF NATURE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

SO great has been the influence of Kant upon modern thought that one might be inclined to regard most of the types of moral theory in the nineteenth century as developments of various sides of his teaching, or as reactions therefrom. Nevertheless this would not be quite correct. The greatest thinkers are not merely leaders of opinion. Their own thought and work is largely determined by moral influences, which they did not originate, and which they did not fully appropriate or express. English empiricism and German rationalism, Mediæval ideas of law and Protestant ideas of liberty met in Kant, and, meeting, overflowed the great reservoir, which his genius constructed for them.

Yet it is true that not only were various forms of idealistic and voluntaristic morals largely due to the inspiration of his teaching, but naturalistic, vitalistic, and positivist ethics became more sharply defined, and even the mystics, encouraged by him, rejoiced to turn away from the phenomenal to the noumenal and find their home in the supersensible, or perhaps the infrasensible.

It will not be possible in this brief survey to do more than indicate a few of the answers which are suggested by nineteenth-century writers to the question: "What is the life according to Nature?" The five or six adjectives employed above indicate various ways of approach to the problem, but the different tendencies blend so variously in different writers that classifications and labels are of little

use. Unfortunately only a few representative names can be mentioned.

As the nineteenth century was pre-eminently interested in the natural sciences, it seems proper to begin with one or two of the more naturalistic schemes. Even here Kant's influence was indirectly powerful. For in addition to offering men who were dissatisfied with the empiricism of Locke and the scepticism of Hume another theory of ethics, he determined more narrowly the boundaries of the knowable and gave enhanced dignity to scientific method in its own sphere. Natural science became more self-confident. It was the fruit of the "understanding." Outside its province was the region of the unknowable. Agnosticism with regard to anything but the phenomenal or physical became the fashion. Men very generally acquiesced in the new meaning given to the word "knowledge," so that in 1850 even the poet-laureate could say, "For knowledge is of things we see."

John Stuart Mill carried on the traditions of the English utilitarians, Hume, Hartley, Bentham, James Mill and others by adopting their general philosophical standpoint. Sentiency remained the test of truth. But he advanced a long way towards a quite different way of regarding morals, when he abandoned the merely quantitative view of happiness and estimated it according to its quality. The sense of "dignity" which Mill introduced into the idea of happiness is not a concept of natural science, and any ethic which recognises it cannot be purely naturalistic.

Although Mill saw the difficulties in which a mechanical and impersonal view of mind had involved his predecessors, he never emancipated himself from its influence, and he was bound, if consistent, to steer clear of any rational view of Nature. The universe as a rational whole could never be an object of knowledge or experience. It was at best an imaginary construction; but whether real or imaginary, it had for Mill no moral value.

As an empiricist Mill would seem to have had no right to accept Nature as anything but a convenient hypothesis,

and the life according to Nature as a rule resting on a more or less plausible fiction. Matter was to him the permanent possibility of sensations, and Nature could only be an imaginary construction of those supposed permanent possibilities. That any such entity as Nature existed, Mill was precluded by his method from demonstrating. Nature for the empiricist is pure fiction, pure hypothesis. It does not necessarily exist and it has no rational character. Its supposed content or meaning can only be discovered by reference to individual, fragmentary, and it may be disconnected experiences, which belong to no permanent ego.

But Nature had for Mill a hypothetical existence, and he said much of a not very complimentary kind concerning it. "In sober truth," he said, "nearly all things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing are nature's everyday performances." The system of Nature (supposing such system exists) is immoral, because the course of material phenomena is "replete with everything which, when committed by human beings, is most worthy of abhorrence. Anyone who endeavoured in his actions to imitate the natural course of things would be universally seen and acknowledged to be the wickedest of men."[1]

In the same forcible manner Huxley expounded his own "gladiatorial" view of the cosmic process, regarding it as essentially immoral, and asserting "that the ethical progress of society depends not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it."[2]

This is pretty strong language to use in regard to a hypothesis. For the empiricists cannot demonstrate the existence of anything called Nature or the cosmic process. It is only a fiction of the imagination invented to explain a group of facts. It may be true, or it may be false. That matters not a whit. If it explains the group of facts under consideration, it is serviceable; and that is all that is required of it. Other facts may be revealed which discredit it. And the experience of mankind, the final arbiter

[1] *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 28, etc.
[2] Romanes Lecture on *Evolution and Ethics*.

according to the empiricists, has not yet pronounced in its favour, or united in assigning a character to it. As a Frenchman has pithily put it, the eighteenth century regarded Nature as kind, the nineteenth century as cruel, and the twentieth century regards her as indifferent. Very likely the twenty-first century will regard her as non-existent.

But Nature to the empiricists is not simply hypothetical. It is also abstract. Mill expressly excludes man from the sphere of Nature. "If nature and man are both the works of a Being of perfect goodness, that Being intended nature as a scheme to be amended not imitated by man," and again he says, "All human action whatever consists in altering, and all useful action in improving the spontaneous course of nature." Man, therefore, even in his useless and immoral actions is at cross-purposes with Nature, and in his useful actions interferes to correct and improve the spontaneous course of Nature. He does not belong to it. He is not in harmony with it. "Some lesser God has made the world and has not power to shape it to his will," without the help of man.

One wonders what is the value of this impotent, irrational abstraction called Nature. Is the gladiatorial theory of the universe, in which an abstract hypothetical entity called Nature is arrayed against man, and possibly against some lesser god who made it, truer to the facts of life, not to say to reason and common sense, than the old Stoic conception of a homogeneous universe of gods and men and things co-ordinated and consolidated by a rational principle, or than the Christian view which denies that Nature is a closed system or self-existent entity ?

Many things have been said regarding this view of Mill's, that Nature is immoral.[1] In the first place, even though this entity, this hypothetical entity, or personification of an abstraction, should be as immoral as she is represented, may it not be with a view to develop by contrast and antagonism the latent good in man ? This is the old-

[1] Among the best Sorley's *Ethics of Naturalism*, p. 133, etc.

time justification of an immoral factor in the universe. Evil is the necessary condition or antecedent of good. It has also been said that here Mill has taken a static view of the world and ignored the teaching of evolution, a strange omission for Mill, and in the case of Huxley a still more difficult supposition.

But the more important question, in this connection, is as to the justification of the hypothesis of a limited and immoral abstraction called "Nature." Is it the only explanation, or an adequate or possible explanation of the evil in the world? If it be so, we must give up the attempt to base morality on Nature.

Kant had also anticipated another line along which subsequent thought was to move in pointing out the limiting conceptions necessary to be applied to the mechanistic view of Nature. One of these limiting conceptions was that of organic life. Life is more than mechanism. The organism transcends the sphere of science in the narrower physical sense. It is "a miracle in the world of experience." In the latter half of the nineteenth century, especially after the publication of the works of Darwin and Wallace, the science of biology rose rapidly in public favour. The "miracle" of life was investigated by an army of conscientious workers, with the result that men became increasingly dissatisfied with the earlier view of Nature. The work of emancipating the minds of men from a merely mechanical view of the world, however, went on slowly in the nineteenth century, and is best seen at the opening of the twentieth. What Professor Pringle-Pattison has called "the liberating influence of biology," is now apparent to us all."[1]

Herbert Spencer's work may be regarded as a link between the old order and the new; and since he himself regarded his ethics as the crown of the elaborate system he constructed, he has given us full information of his views on morals.

Notwithstanding the fact that Hume had dissolved

[1] *The Idea of God*, Ch. IV.

Nature, and Mill and Huxley only raised her to life again to vilify her, Herbert Spencer most chivalrously came forward in her defence. She was much too august a personage to be reviled by an obsolete, incompetent empiricism. She could be revived and rehabilitated by the newer and more satisfactory methods of evolutionary science. As so restored and reclothed, she was fit to become the presiding genius of morality. So an attempt was made to establish morality on biology, and biological ethics would seem to be the principal if not the only rival to Christianity, the last attempt of the modern mind to determine the foundations of ethics.

Spencer went back to the beginnings of life, to the lowest forms of life, to discover its behaviour. He then traced the progress of life upwards from these unicellular organisms to man. And he found that the path of the evolution of life had been "from an indefinite, incoherent, homogeneity to a definite, coherent, heterogeneity." So this too must be the course of morals.[1]

We might feel disposed to ask in passing why life should always act in the same way. Granted that Spencer is right in his account of physical life, why should life be tied down to one method, and simply reproduce its action in the moral sphere? One could at least imagine a variation and reversal in the higher sphere. Nevertheless the scientific or rather unscientific principle of uniformity is always ready to hand. It is "scientifically" established that the law of life in morals must be the same as in biology, and that the definite is to be preferred to the vague, the differentiated to the undifferentiated, the complex to the simple, the representative to the presentative, and the re-representative to the representative. Moral conduct is therefore distinguished from immoral or less moral conduct by its complex or ideal character.

But this might mean that a far-seeing and clever rogue was more moral than an honest man, who chose the immediate and obvious line of duty. Mere complexity is no

[1] *Data of Ethics.*

sign of an advanced type of morality. "Except ye become as little children ye shall in nowise enter the Kingdom of Heaven," said the great Teacher, who did not found His morals on biology.

Another line which Spencer took has seemed more promising to some. In his exposition of the gradual evolution of the higher forms of action, which he speaks of specifically as "conduct," Spencer finds that there is a point at which truly ethical conduct begins. It is when the struggle for existence gives place to mutual aid, and men learn to co-operate with one another, subordinating individual interests to the general good. In the early stages of evolution, the struggle for existence tends to make a man's relations with his fellows hostile. But this is due to imperfect evolution. As evolution proceeds, adjustments, compromises, mutual help, are possible. The militant stage of society gives place to the industrial.

Now those who disagree with Spencer may have to admit that something like this does sometimes take place, that industrialism succeeds militarism. But does it always take place? And even if the question should be answered in the affirmative, why are we bound to acquiesce? Is the latest necessarily the best? May there not be decadence as well as progress? May not industrialism again give place to militarism? Who is to decide which is the better? Why should we call the stage of conflicting interests the stage of imperfect evolution? Or if there should be a relapse from industrialism into militarism, why should we speak of it as unnatural? The course of Nature is one of ups and downs, and who is to say whether the ups or downs are to be preferred? From the standpoint of one who believes that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesses," ruthless industrial competition or mutual aid in the encouragement of soul-destroying industries may be worse than some forms of more primitive warfare. At any rate the question of value is not one of time, earlier or later.

Is it true that in the physical realm the laws of adapta-

tion and progress rather than exploitation and eternal recurrence obtain? What are we to say with regard to the human body? Metchnikoff has told us that there are a comparatively small number of organs in the human body that are developing, a rather larger number that are decadent, and a very large majority in a rudimentary condition. What is the order of life there? A thousand years may only be a very small fraction of time: but if we look to the short periods within human history, is there evidence of increasing powers of body and of mind? Benjamin Kidd thought that the Athenian race was as much superior to us as we are to the negro African.[1] And he is not alone in his opinion. Evolution does not seem to express a constant law of Nature, if by evolution we mean increasing complexity and more perfect development of mind and body. And as regards the world, is that becoming "more exquisitely fitted to the mind of man," or to his bodily powers? When it has reached the term of millenniums allotted to it by science, will the extinction of human life on this planet be for the good of the whole? We cannot tell. Nor can we say that to act according to Nature in the fullest sense known to us is to progress.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century Herbert Spencer made two interesting statements, one of which, if not both, was of the nature of a personal confession. In the first he expressed his disappointment with the practical results of the application of evolution to morals. "The doctrine of evolution has not furnished guidance to the extent I had hoped. . . . Right regulation of the actions of so complex a being as man, living under conditions so complex as those presented by a society, evidently forms a subject-matter unlikely to admit of definite conclusions throughout its entire range."[2] The moral lessons written in the Book of Nature are not always easy to decipher, even with the help afforded by the principle of evolution. And in the second statement, possibly also with a backward

[1] *Social Evolution*, p. 272.
[2] *Principles of Ethics*, II. 123.

look over his own work, Spencer confessed how impossible it was to conceive of Life "in physico-chemical terms."[1] The mystery of Life involves an indefinite enlargement of the sphere of Nature. Biology has rendered impossible a return to Nature, as very generally understood in the nineteenth century. How then are we now to understand the life according to Nature? Is it anything more than simply to live?

The naturalistic mystics have, especially during the last thirty or forty years, very insistently made their views heard. But from a more scientific standpoint Spencer's altruistic view of morals has been attacked. Life, it is said, attains its maximum development in purely egoistic effort. Association is with a view to the increase of vital intensity in oneself rather than for the benefit of others. A wise man knows that for the attainment of his own ambitions or the complete development of his powers he is largely dependent upon others. To look after himself is his first obligation, but he cannot do that without some regard for the interests of others. No one can be an egoist without to some extent also being an altruist; but egoism is the natural law. The law of love, says Le Dantec, must not be confused with the law of Nature. The natural fact is association with a view to dominance.[2] What science shows us, says another biologist, Novicow, is that when certain beings by association can increase their vital intensity this association becomes the very foundation of their existence. This is the biological law and upon it alone can morality be based. Not the smallest atom of love to one's neighbour is necessary in order to place morality on an immovable foundation. The categorical imperative of Kant is nothing but the instinct of life which impels every living creature to prolong and intensify its existence. "Thou oughtest," means, "If you do not do this you will die."[3] Biology therefore explains not simply the indicative

[1] *Principles of Biology* (later editions).
[2] *La Lutte Universelle*, p. 283.
[3] *La Morale et L'Intérêt*, pp. 20, 49.

but the imperative of morality. All that a man hath will he give for his life.

It does not seem to me of great importance to decide whether the conduct of the lower creatures is more fitly described as egoistic or altruistic, or in what proportion the two principles may be blended. Where there is no idea of self, or consciousness of self, it is inappropriate to use such words as selfish or unselfish. It is not till we reach the highest level of mental life that self emerges. No creature lower than man, so far as we know, can form an idea of self or direct its action with that idea as the end.

But many persons like to think that, though this may be so from the standpoint of the individual organism, it is not true of the whole. The unselfish principle must somehow be involved in the very nature of things and be paramount there. It must be a fact of Nature. Love must be " Creation's final law." But that is to get away from what science knows as "Nature," for science cannot speak of any law as final. It is the world too as given in sense perception that science knows as Nature. But to which of the senses does unselfishness appeal ? Moral things are morally discerned.

So it is often said that there is no forgiveness in Nature. It may be so. In the scientific sense of the word " Nature," a mere scheme or impersonal order given in perception and independent of thought and the higher activities of the minds engaged in observing it, it would seem as if it must be so. Forgiveness is a personal act and does not properly belong to an impersonal scheme. If there is a personal Being behind or within Nature then forgiveness might conceivably be expressed in close association with phenomena purely natural: but the forgiveness is not the natural phenomena themselves. Nature knows nothing of forgiveness or its opposite. It is the hypostatising, personalising, and deifying of a supposed abstract entity called Nature that creates the confusion. Nature, then, becomes, as Professor Carveth Read put it, " a shamefaced name for God."[1]

[1] *Natural and Social Morals*, p. 15.

The determination on the part of modern scientists that Nature shall not be so regarded seems to me quite natural. They have chosen their own point of view from which to look out upon the world of reality and they are justified in exploring it along their own line and by their own methods to the furthest bounds. However difficult it may be for theologians and metaphysicians to gain the detachment necessary to take an intelligent interest in Nature as so conceived and so described, it ought to be worth the effort. They will probably feel all the time that that is not what they mean by Nature, but they will be glad to discover how far purely scientific methods can take us. The philosophy of science as opposed to metaphysics, first philosophy, or theology, modestly and yet confidently puts forth its claim to be recognised.

A twentieth-century scientist like Professor A. N. Whitehead defines Nature as "that which we observe in perception through the senses,"[1] and is very anxious that everything else shall be rigorously excluded. We must learn to think about Nature without thinking about thought, that is homogeneously. We must concentrate on what is given us in sense-experience, rigorously excluding not only our thoughts about things, but even the sense-awareness itself. This is possible, for as a matter of experience Nature is closed both to sense-awareness and to thought. It cannot include them. It is only the terminus of sense-perception. "What we ask from the philosophy of science is some account of the coherence of things perceptively known," which means "refusal to countenance any theory of psychic additions to the objects known in perception."[2] In particular any reference to moral or æsthetic values must be excluded.[3] So "Natural philosophy should never ask what is in the mind and what is in nature. To do so is a confession that it has failed to express relations between things perceptively known, viz., to express those natural relations whose expression is natural philosophy." This

[1] *The Concept of Nature*, p. 4.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

strict delimitation of the boundary between the natural and the mental and moral world seems to the non-scientific mind very difficult to maintain, and even so highly trained a scientist as Professor Whitehead himself says: "It may be a task too hard for us."[1]

It is to be hoped that it may not prove a task too hard for the scientist. We should all like to know what the complex of entities or things existing as the terminus of sense-perception may be. But as moral values are carefully excluded, it would seem as if the life according to Nature, so understood, were definitely non-moral. Natural science can give the moralist no help.

In the eighteenth century, as we saw, the life according to Nature meant sometimes a life lived in harmony with the nature of things, sometimes a life lived agreeably to the constitution or system of human nature. So in the nineteenth century, Nature continued to be regarded both in a wider and in a narrower sense. Moral principles were thought by some to be so involved in the structure of the universe as determined by the physicists, that they must needs emerge into clear light as the result of their investigations. To such "the nature of things" meant very definitely the nature of the physical universe. Man might be included in this scheme, or be partly within it and partly outside; but what was desired was that his conduct should be considered in relation to this larger whole. But there were others again, who thought, as some in the previous century had done, that the proper study of mankind was man, and preferred to concentrate their attention upon the facts and laws of human nature.

Amongst the latter was Auguste Comte, the Positivist. Edward Caird and more recently Professor Pringle-Pattison have pointed out two opposite lines of thought in Comte, the one presenting Nature as indifferent, or hostile to man, and the other as a friend and helper in disguise. But Comte's interest is in man, not in Nature; or only in

[1] *The Concept of Nature*, p. 30.

Nature for the sake of man. It is like Browning's "dance of plastic circumstance":

> Machinery just meant
> To give thy soul its bent,
> Try thee and turn thee forth
> Sufficiently impressed.

The two are not congenial. Nature and man are not homogeneous, and, as theology and metaphysics have been left far behind in the interests of positive knowledge, there is no wider concept under which they can be brought. "Nature and man are not part of one scheme of things; nature is just as it were a brute fact with which man finds himself confronted." [1]

So the life according to Nature—and Comte stoutly resists every idea of the supernatural—in this case can only mean the life according to human nature. But not in Butler's sense. It is not now the nature of the individual man, but Humanity which is to determine how he should live. We are to act virtuously, not primarily because our natures were made for virtue, but because we are parts of one great organism, one living Being called Humanity. We are to be true to the larger interests and share the larger life of the whole. We must live for others. Altruism now becomes the fundamental law.

This may seem an improvement on the individualism of the eighteenth century, and even to come nearer to the Christian point of view; but as developed by Comte it does not satisfy the claims of science, philosophy, or theology.

It is bad science because it rests on too narrow an induction. It does not take into account all the facts, and in particular the facts of religious experience, which are vouched for by many of the leading saints included in his Calendar. These facts of experience are simply ignored or ruled out by Comte's anti-supernaturalist dogmatism. And yet, as Professor Boutroux has reminded us, these men and women became what they were, and so obtained

[1] *The Idea of God*, pp. 146, 153.

their places among the saints of the Positivists, by faith in a wider order of reality than that recognised by Comte, that is to say, just "because they did not believe in his religion."[1] It was a curious procedure to place the Apostle Paul or Dante or Moses or Mohammed among the saints, and yet deny the validity of the experiences which made them what they were.

For to omit relevant facts, which were well-known to him, was virtually to pass judgment upon them. The facts to which his saints bore witness were excluded from his universe of reality. And yet they might have given him the clue to a more rational synthesis of the sciences than that supplied by "Humanity." For Comte, though he may have regarded science as mainly descriptive, was not content with the mere collecting, grouping, and description of phenomena. He wished to arrange the sciences themselves in a definite hierarchy. He also propounded the doctrine of their discontinuity. The methods proper, for example, in mathematics were wrong in biology. This is not science in the proper sense of the word, but the philosophy of science, and here Comte had to confess his failure. He could not establish the unity of the sciences on any rational ground. He had to fall back on sentiment, and finally lapsed into mythology, whither the scientists could not follow him.

It was in 1845, when he fell in love with Clotilde de Vaux, that according to Comte himself the change took place. It was comparable, though opposite in its character, with that which occurred in the case of another overwrought and almost broken genius, when he said farewell to Frau Cosima Wagner, whom he had once regarded as by far the best authority in matters of taste.[2] As Byron would have said: "A change came over the spirit of my dream." Whether the change, in the case of Comte, was for better or worse, there can be no doubt about one of the causes which powerfully contributed to it; and it is

[1] *Science and Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 80.
[2] Grützmacher, *Nietzsche*, p. 22.

interesting to recall the lament of Nietzsche over the downfall of one whom he regarded as a greater master of the exact sciences than any German or Englishman of the century.

To the philosopher or the theologian the Humanity of Comte appears like a broken column placed upon the earth, but not rooted in it, pointing disconsolately to heaven; or as someone has called it "an island" in the midst of an ocean which we are forbidden to explore. To the Christian it is a temple without the chief corner-stone, erected to the honour of an unknown God. It is a body without a head, an organism without its animating spirit.

In spite of the idealisms and the mythologies of the later Comte, the universe in which he lived and worked was the phenomenal world, the world of positive science. He is a sociologist rather than a moral philosopher. His interest is in what is, not in what ought to be. He thinks of society rather than of the individual, and he starts from a frankly naturalistic position. That he should have ended in sentimental mysticism may have been a misfortune or the natural issue of temperament and prior experiences, but so it was.

Before illustrating the consequences for ethics of Comte's sociological studies we may select one more example of biological or vitalistic ethics, and for this we will turn again to France. Let it be the brilliant and audacious author of the *Outline of an Ethic without Obligation or Sanction*. Jean-Marie Guyau was born in 1854 and died at the early age of thirty-three. His character and work have been sympathetically described by his distinguished step-father, Alfred Fouillée.[1] Dissatisfied with the prosaic, calculating morality of the earlier English utilitarians and with the evolutionary morality of Darwin and Spencer, Guyau sought for a less mechanical principle of morals and found it in life itself. Not in the pursuit of happiness and not in mere adaptation to one's environment was the secret of living to be found, but in the deepening and expansion of

[1] *La Morale l'Art et la Religion d'après Guyau*, especially Chs. V. and VI.

life in the individual. Natural selection and group morality are merely derivative notions. The primacy lies with life. It is more than law, and moral fruitfulness overflows the boundary of human society. To discover what life is and how it behaves it is reasonable to begin with the higher forms rather than the lower, with man rather than the amœba ; and with the manifestations of life we presumably know best, that is, those within ourselves. Life, however, is something which we share. "If I regard my soap-bubble it is to discover there a ray of the sun."

Life unfolds itself because it is life. Having its springs down below in the obscure region of the instincts, it manifests itself on the levels of conscious life, and when it gets there it may override, if not destroy, the instincts. The highest life is not the life of instinct. Self-conscious life is more powerful than mere instinct. We may lose even a good instinct, like modesty, by reasoning too much about it. It is therefore foolish to say with Leslie Stephen that moral theories have little influence on practice and that humanity goes its way in spite of all the reasoners. Ideas are powerful solvents even as applied to instinctive feelings and modes of action. The political, social and religious notions of an earlier civilisation will crumble in the presence of advancing knowledge and better reasoning, for these are the signs and symptoms of expanding life.

The highest life is the fullest life, the life which is most extensive and intensive, the life in which the powers of mind and heart reach fullest expression. The thought of mere length of days shrivels up in the consciousness of life itself. It would be better for one moment to have the experience of Sir Isaac Newton when he discovered his great law, or of Jesus as He spoke of love in the Sermon on the Mount, than to endure a life-time of empty pleasures and colourless experiences.

Life is marvellously fruitful, but also prodigal and apparently careless. A million acorns and perhaps one oak tree. There are risks to be run, and we are so constituted that we find a pleasure in risk. Enthusiasm must somehow

replace religious faith and moral law. We must not, like the religious people, hope because we believe. We must believe because we hope. And we must hope because we feel the energies of an expanding life within. But what if vitality runs low, and heart fails, and the outward man is felt to be perishing. Where are the supports of the inner life? Uncertainty, said Guyau, pressing equally upon us on all sides is for us equivalent to certitude and renders possible our liberty. Yet if he knew the joys of adventure, he speaks more feelingly of the torments of the unknown, and he concludes: "I have not sufficient faith either in the objective reality or in the rationality even of my joys for them to be able to attain their maximum."

The buoyancy of youth and the exhilaration of natural sentiment may seem to some to offer a more alluring pathway into the mysteries of life than external obligation and non-natural sanctions, but many have felt with Wordsworth the weight of chance desires and the weariness of unchartered freedom. Both life and law have however received a new meaning in the Gospel, which is "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Vitalism and legalism both find their fulfilment here in the larger universe of a divinely-human personality.

CHAPTER XV

THE ETHICS OF NATURE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (*Continued*)

BUT the more naturalistic thinkers, who appropriated one side of the Kantian view of Nature and made it the starting-point for their treatment of the positive sciences and of morals were not the only philosophers who spoke of "Nature." Idealists and voluntarists, who were in much closer sympathy with Kant's general outlook, made use of that wider conception of Nature which went back through Kant and Spinoza and others to Mediæval and ancient philosophy. In any review of nineteenth-century teaching regarding the life according to Nature they claim a place.

It would not be easy to do anything like justice to all the varieties of thought covered by these terms even in a series of chapters. In a few paragraphs little more than general impressions can be given. But more important than any personal conclusions, if they could be fully stated, would be the reminder not only of the differences of rival schools and of the many variations within them, but also of the great changes which came over the opinions of individual philosophers, as they continued to reflect on the meaning of the natural order.

The idealists of the nineteenth century furnish impressive evidence of the power of the human mind to grapple with abstract themes. Their greatest achievements however have not been in the sphere of ethics, but in the realms of metaphysics and epistemology. This seems to me to be specially true in the case of the purest and most consistent forms of idealism.

One of the earliest of the German idealists was J. G.

Fichte, of whose moral enthusiasm there can be no doubt, however inadequate may seem to us the intellectual constructions which appeared to him to support or justify it. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, for the ordinary man to understand what is meant by the Ego or free Spirit, or impersonal Absolute, which Fichte says posits itself, creating a material world in opposition to which it can develop its own resources. "Setting up a world," as Professor A. K. Rogers says, "simply for the sake of knocking it down again."[1] How can this impersonal Absolute, which is a substitute for a personal God, do anything so futile, or indeed do anything at all? Will is not an attribute of an impersonal order, and morality has no meaning except in the realm of personality. The individual self of Fichte is a higher entity than his Absolute, because he at least has a will and can say, with the wise man of the Stoics, that God is only moral by nature not by choice.

Fichte's abstract view of the Ego or Absolute, and consequent exaltation of the individual will, prepared the way for the anarchical egoism of Max Stirner. But Fichte himself had far too much respect for human reason and the claims of the whole to go along that path himself. He stopped half-way. Humanity took the place of the Personal God, who had been banished from his logical scheme. The life according to Reason was the one which secured the moral approval of mankind. It remained for Max Stirner to put the accent on the little ego.

But a vague humanitarianism was not the last phase of Fichte's thought, nor his last message to the world. Through the influence of Kant's idea of the will as belonging to the noumenal world or world of things-in-themselves, and therefore free from the causality that pertains to phenomena, Fichte believed he had escaped from the hard determinism of Spinoza, to which he had once given adherence. But the idea of a mysterious world of things-in-themselves, if it enabled him to assert human freedom, did not emancipate him from the abstractness of Spinoza's

[1] *Students' History of Philosophy*, p. 444.

Absolute or enable him to believe in the Divine freedom. In the last period of his life he lapsed into a mystical pantheism in which even the human will was sacrificed.

Equally notable was the intellectual career of Schelling, perhaps the most representative thinker of his time, a veritable Zimri among the philosophers:

> So various that he seemed to be
> Not one, but all mankind's Epitome.

Five periods have been signalised in his wonderfully varied and often profound speculations. Roughly speaking, they are: firstly, the period when he was most completely under the influence of Fichte's idealism; secondly, the period in which he was developing his own philosophy of Nature as the Self or Ego in process of becoming, and so trying to give to Nature a more important meaning; thirdly, when under the influence of Spinoza the differences between the ideal and the real, thought and being, spirit and nature, were being transcended and knowledge of the Absolute attained; fourthly, the period in which the mysticism latent in this idea of the intuition of the Absolute blossomed out into Neoplatonism; and fifthly, the period when under the influence of Jacob Böehme's dualistic theory he found a dark principle within the Godhead by which not only external nature but evil also became possible.

It passes the wit of man, I think, to say what the life according to Nature or the life according to Reason can mean in this chameleon-like philosophy or theosophy. But it is significant that Schelling himself seemed to have regarded his latest views as best fitted to provide a foundation for ethics. The principles of light and darkness are both to be found in the Godhead, but the latter is inseparably united with and so controlled by the former. It is, moreover, the necessary condition for the manifestation of the Divine love and so of the perfect activity of Deity. Nevertheless this dark principle of Nature which is in God, becomes

the occasion of sin in man; not because God wills it so, but because man has already sinned in a timeless state of existence.

Nature then would seem to be not radically evil, for it exists in God, but only the excitant or incentive to evil in guilty man. We are reminded of the Pauline doctrine, when the law came, that law which was holy and just and good, "sin revived and I died."[1] But the Apostle was dealing with a moral experience, not with a metaphysical problem. He was not interested in the problem of the origin of evil, and never attempted to base his ethics on Gnostic fancies. It was not the origin of sin, but redemption from sin that he regarded as fundamental. His ethics were based on a redemption historically achieved, and manifested in human experience. And so were the ethics of the Apostle John, for whose teaching Schelling had a greater admiration, because his ideas regarding it were apparently more confused even than in the case of the teaching of Paul and Peter.

But greater in fame than Fichte or Schelling is Hegel, more properly called Hagel (or hail), said Nietzsche, because of the destructions he has wrought "in the harvest-fields of a truly European Kultur"; but generally considered, I suppose, by those who understand him, and by those who do not, as the greatest philosopher of the nineteenth century. He is at least the typical German professor, whom Heine at once praised and satirised, when he confessed that he was looking for someone to repair the universe, co-ordinating everything into a reasonable system, "with his dressing-gown and nightcap stopping up the cracks in the edifice of the world."[2]

There is always something to be learnt from the judgments of even erratic genius and one is tempted to add a third, also German, that Christianity as interpreted by Hegel is more legalistic than Judaism itself. There is material here for a long discussion and perhaps final reprobation of Hegel and all his works. If one may be brief and

[1] Rom. vii. 9. [2] *Zu fragmentarisch ist Welt und Leben.*

therefore dogmatic, no man in Germany was more responsible for that subordination of religion to philosophy, ethics to a theory of rights, the Church to the State, truth to concepts, and liberty to mechanism, which led to the devastations of the European war, than was Hegel. There can be few scourges more terrible than the tyranny of mere abstract thinking and few sights more ludicrous than that of a man who thinks he can account for the Absolute and trace its fortunes throughout the whole universe of men and things. Hegel's theory of rights is sometimes thought to be an advance on the ethics of Kant, because he brought the concrete institutions of the family, the Church, and the State into closer connection with his principles than did Kant. But those institutions have suffered almost irremediably through his attempt to link them up with his harsh and mechanical theory of the Absolute. And the greatest wrong of all was done to the Christianity which he misunderstood and despoiled, robbing it of its grace and truth and life, that he might again present it to the world as alive from the dead.

It is not for one who cannot claim to have been initiated into " the secret of Hegel " to say that pearls of great price may not be found therein. But the initiates are few, and they do not agree among themselves either as to what Hegel did mean or ought to have meant. The system which makes the most careful and elaborate and exclusive appeal to human reason has not yet been able even after a hundred years to get a clear verdict from philosophers either as to its truth or meaning. It is *par excellence* the modern Mystery cult. This being so, we can only judge it from without and by its fruits in those who receive it.

For Hutchison Stirling, who believed that he had discovered the secret of Hegel, the history of Philosophy ended with the death of Hegel. But it is not possible for us to stop there. Restatements and modifications of Idealism ought to count for something ; and some at least of the numerous reactions from it have a historic interest and value.

Hegel had so impoverished the content of the Idea of God that the Idea found itself able to pass over into Nature by a merely logical process. It occurred to one of his disciples that as the transference was so easy, the process might be reversed and the idea of Nature find its way back to God. So Feuerbach declared that Mind or Spirit was simply "Nature in its otherness," the shadow cast by the realities of sense, or as it was reserved for a more scientific mind to call it an "epiphenomenon." Hegel said the rational was the real; Feuerbach, that the real was the rational, and by the real he meant the things which he himself felt and touched and saw, and finally, when his own experience of the higher things of life was vanishing away, what he ate: "Man is what he eats." So the idealism of Hegel, the doctrine of a ghostly entity or logical abstraction which was constitutive of things, gave place in the case of one of his disciples on the extreme left to the modern Epicurean doctrine that if a man diets himself wisely he will not see ghosts, and again, if all things, are possible in the logical, why not in the philological realm: "*Man ist was er isst*"! On the right Hegel's philosophy was expounded by thinkers who adopted a much more Christian standpoint, but these do not directly concern us here. Among the philosophers less consciously influenced in their speculations by the Christian view of the world are many distinguished idealists, British and Continental, and from the side of ethics none is more justly honoured than T. H. Green, who sought to show that there was a "spiritual" principle in Nature and so that the life lived truly according to Nature had dignity and spiritual value. He was followed in England by Mr F. T. Bradley, in whose writings we see "the bankruptcy of the system of idealism in the realm of ethics." [1]

Attempts to rehabilitate Idealism have been going on apace in recent years under the keen scrutiny of watchful Realists. Italy in particular has been the centre of this new movement. Already, with the independence which

[1] Sorley, *Recent Tendencies in Ethics*, p. 88.

characterises the true philosopher, Giovanni Gentile has gone beyond, or retreated from, some of the positions taken by his friend Benedetto Croce; and it is specially interesting to notice how strongly Gentile protests that his own "anti-intellectualism" is the true intellectualism and "the very antipodes of mysticism."[1] He too believes that he has found "the guiding thread which will lead us out of the labyrinth in which the human mind has been for ever straying."[2] And when we take it into our hands we find that it is the same old thread which Hamlet in the day of his perplexity laid hold of, though it may be dyed another colour: "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."

But that is trespassing too far beyond the frontiers of the twentieth century. Let us go back twenty years or so for another view of the idealism of the time. "From the point of view of Personal Idealism," says the writer, "it is the individual's own inviolate experience which is the central fact in Moral Philosophy."[3] But if this be so, how can there be a moral universe, or any rational account of it? If it be all centre and no circumference, is it a universe at all? How are these myriads of centres of "inviolate experience" related to one another or to the whole? Are there as many moral systems as there are individual centres?

The difficulties of a purely autonomous Personal Idealism may be as formidable as those of Absolute Idealism though of a different kind; and I do not know where the rival claims and peculiar difficulties of the two kinds of Idealism can be met except in the Ethics of the Gospel. The central fact of Christian moral philosophy is not the individual's spiritual experience, nor some universal concept or abstract law, but the fact of Christ. Christian ethics are not autonomous, but Christ-onomous. The moral universe of the New Testament is not Ptolemaic but Copernican.

[1] The *Theory of Mind as Pure Act*, p. 274.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 244.
[3] B. Gibson, *A Philosophical Introduction to Ethics*, p. v.

It is the Kingdom of God, and its law is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

"The plain fact seems to be," says the same writer, "that man does sit at the centre of his own immediate experience." [1] This might be true in the case of one who had gained complete self-mastery. But it is not true of the ordinary man. Emerson's saying: "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind," seems a much more faithful description of his experience. To keep seated in the centre of all the tumultuous passions and changing experiences of our inner life, surveying all, controlling all, is a task too hard for most of us. And, if we could keep seated there, we should not be at the centre of the moral universe, but simply enclosed in our own little microcosmos, and drifting further and further away, it might be, from any point where we could hope to gain a larger view of life.

Very different from any of the foregoing was the line taken by another philosopher who went back to Kant, and in particular to Kant's mysterious world of things-in-themselves. Partly idealist, partly voluntarist, for he regarded the world both as idea and will, though in the strict sense of the words he was neither, Schopenhauer with much confidence propounded his views of the universe and the morality proper to it. And this he did so powerfully, that his writings were among the most popular of all nineteenth-century works on philosophy. The most fundamental thing in the world according to this teaching is not matter; nor is it life; nor is it thought. It is will. The will is the thing-in-itself. Life is merely an appearance of will. So is the body. And knowledge is due to the functioning of one organ of our material bodies under the influence of this mysterious entity called will. It is the primordial stuff which gives rise to or constitutes the essence of everything we see and know. Prior to all

[1] B. Gibson, *A Philosophical Introduction to Ethics*, p. 222. This, the writer however thinks, is only "the starting-point," and he also admits that Personal Idealism "may have erred somewhat in being too Ptolemaic."

knowledge and all life and all consciousness, prior to the body and all material things, it exists. That consciousness should be regarded as a requirement and condition of will, Schopenhauer characterises as an old delusion. "The agreement of my views with those of Theism amounts, however, to no more than this, that we can none of us think of the ultimate essence of things except as a will." [1] But in his case it was an unconscious will. The will was completely outside consciousness, original and underived. It was not an organic impulse for it existed independently of the body. It was not life, but some mysterious power behind life. It was the unconscious and inevitable "will to live." It belongs to us all and the wisdom of man consists in keeping it in its proper place, that is, below the level of our conscious life. It must not be allowed to manifest itself in consciousness. The life according to Nature is the unconscious life, and compassion for those who cannot get back to the unconscious life of the plant, or to the Indian's Nirvana, the greatest virtue.

The main doctrine of Schopenhauer was worked out with more Gnostic thoroughness and ingenuity by Edward von Hartmann. Starting with the idea of an Unconscious Absolute, who possessed an unconscious Reason and an unconscious Will, Hartmann tried to construct a theory of the world-process and to deduce from it a philosophy of life. Having inadvertently made a huge mistake in the creation of the world of conscious life, the Unconscious Absolute called upon its unconscious Reason to repair the mischief done by its unconscious Will. And the morality of man consists in helping the Absolute to mitigate the effects of its own initial blunder. In doing this it is essential that man should pass through three stages, the first being the period of unreflective and instinctive conduct; the second that in which he comes under the painful discipline of conscious desire and deliberation and choice; and the third that in which he attains the state of being beyond good and evil, when all intentional morality is left

[1] *Parerga*, I. 14, transl. W. Jekyll, p. 4.

far behind. In each of these conditions, which might be called the natural, the unnatural, and the supernatural, he must as far as in him lies glorify the Unconscious Absolute and submit even to the second sorrowful condition as to a Divine ordaining.

As Dr Rashdall pointed out, this fantastic scheme has the merit of connecting ethics with a general view of the universe and so with religion.[1] But perhaps it would have been wiser to have kept morality altogether outside of this Gnostic framework. It is difficult to see what either religion or morality has to gain from such a combination, unless it be that a philosophy of despair is made to look ridiculous.

This glorification of the Unconscious may be a way of expressing disappointment at the failure of all materialistic, vitalistic and idealistic schemes of morals to bear us safely over the stormy sea of life; but to choose the Unconscious is to drown ourselves at once in its depths.

Yet this is what some of the psychologists as well as metaphysicians are trying to persuade us to do. It is not a very long journey, one would say, from the philosophy of the Unconscious Absolute to a "Psychology without a soul" or the modern concentration of interest on the subconscious mind. Speaking for the psycho-analysts Furtmüller has said that the great function of psycho-analysis in ethics is to depose conscience once for all from its supreme place, by laying bare the unconscious motives which are the real determinants of our actions.[2] This does not mean simply that we may often be deceived as to our own motives; but that the first and last word lies, so to put it, with the unconscious. Butler's view of an authoritative but impotent faculty or reflective principle at the head of the constitution of human nature is exchanged for an anarchy in which the reins of so-called government are handed over to the blind unconscious forces, which act within or upon men's minds. Even the utilitarian conten-

[1] *The Theory of Good and Evil*, II. p. 280.
[2] *Psycho-analyse und Ethik*, p. 4.

tion that actions are to be judged by their results is regarded as obsolete. Origin, not end or purpose or value, origin, not consequences or effects, is everything; and that origin is found, or rather imagined to lie, in the world of the unconscious.

More rational accounts of the place of will in morals, if not in Nature, were given by many nineteenth-century moralists, including the distinguished succession of French voluntarists, beginning with Maine de Biran, who was called by König "the French Kant," continued, amongst others, by Renouvier (more justly regarded as Kant's successor),[1] Fouillée and Poincaré and many more recent philosophers, such as Henri Bergson, though here again we remember how deceptive labels are.

Fouillée is specially interesting because of the way in which he endeavoured to safeguard the interests both of will and intellect, and for the skilful manner in which he sought to base ethics on psychology. He held that all the phenomena or powers of mind are inseparably connected, and share in the properties more distinctive of each, somewhat in the same way, I suppose, as the theologians speak of the *communicatio idiomatum* in connection with the Trinity.[2] No hard and fast line must be drawn between the work and functions of such inseparable friends. Intelligence, for example, shares the nature of instinct or conation. It is itself an activity and does not, so to speak, wait for the will to set it going. Thinking is itself a tendency, a force or movement, as urgent and spontaneous as any other tendency of our nature. An idea always tends to realise itself, because of its own inherent force. As it has this quality it may throw light on the more obscure principle of the will, and so suggest a source or explanation of the moral life. What then is the essence of thinking? It is impersonal and altruistic. It is a going out of self, a movement towards an object. It is at least a momentary forgetting of self in the object, a disinterested investiture

[1] Stebbing, *Pragmatism and French Voluntarism*, p. 92.

[2] The illustration was suggested to me by P. T. Forsyth.

of the object with something of our own life. To be moral is therefore to think. This is not a revival of the old Socratic doctrine that virtue is knowledge. It is rather the theory that virtue is thinking.

Psychology then shows, according to Fouillée, that egoism is contrary to the nature of mind. The rule of morals thus becomes, "Be wholly conscious and universally conscious, conscious of others, of society, of every one as of thyself." But how will the rule work? Is it sufficient merely to think? Does nothing depend on the content of the thoughts? If so the thoughts of an evilly-disposed man might seem as moral as those of a well-disposed man, seeing they may be both alike directed towards an object. But Fouillée held that the character of the objects of our thought was all-important. There are some objects of thought which elicit more of the self than others. The more varied and the more unified (and here Socrates seems to be coming back) the objects of a man's thoughts, the more moral he becomes. The intensity, extensity and protensity of the thinking must all be taken into account. The three combined give us the measure of the morality of an action. Vice is the arrested development of thought.

There is truth in this, and like nearly everything else of the kind that is worth saying, it takes us back to Greek philosophy. "To live in the light of the universal order is to be awake," is a saying ascribed to an ancient activist; and by "living," Heraclitus, "the moving philosopher," certainly meant movement also. "To turn aside into one's own microcosmos is to be asleep." Plato reproached the Athenians of his day for what he regarded as their greatest vice, their versatility, their failure to appreciate the cosmos, their flippant thinking. There was extensity about it, but not intensity or protensity. They dissipated their thoughts over too wide an area. They gave themselves up too readily to every chance claimant for their attention. They had no depth, no power of concentration, no ability to think things together. They had squandered themselves over too many

things. They were therefore immoral. Intensity and protensity were wanting in their thinking. And it was this vice that baffled the Apostle Paul, when long afterwards he went to Athens. The Athenians were interested in things, but they had lost their power to think about them, so that when he preached to them the truths of God, they thought he was just a σπερμολόγος like themselves, a picker up of scraps of knowledge, a cawing rook, an idle babbler. That was their condemnation. They had lost their power to think. They had lost their sense of the harmonies of life, the power to appreciate the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God. They were living in a world of at best two dimensions.

But this is not the whole of the truth. Immorality is not simply a failure to think long enough or widely enough or even deeply enough. It is not simply to prefer one's own microcosmos to the illimitable universe of God. It is the failure to see that our little world of self is not a microcosmos at all, but a scene of confusion and no faithful copy of the perfect universe of God. That is what is wrong with naturalism, whether mind be introduced into the scheme or not. It implies a universe of which the individual man is the centre, a man who can simply project the confusions and discords of his own experience on to a larger universe beyond. The failure of vision is due to a wrong attitude of mind. The will must first be changed. And no mere ideal however lofty can change the will. The ideals of life, said Fouillée, are not imperative. They are only persuasive. "I ought" signifies at bottom "I wish."

With the vanishing of the "ought"—its translation into wish—passes away what we have regarded as the distinguishing mark of ethics. And with it passed away also for Fouillée the possibility of obtaining certainty and objectivity for his thoughts. Ideals of truth and beauty and goodness, he felt, might be only unsubstantial dreams. We cannot prove them to be real. At best we can only hazard a belief in them. They are based on the subjective

bias of the individual thinker, and the opposites may be the truly real. They are not scientifically established, but we may hope that they are true. Finding no firm footing on the rock of the positive sciences, all that we can do is to hope and to trust.[1]

Another view of Nature, which goes back to Leibnitz, was revived in the nineteenth century by Rosmini, Fechner and others, and acquired considerable popularity owing largely to the growing interest in psychology. The discoveries of modern biology not only made the mechanical view of the universe, which Descartes held, seem untenable to many, but also broke down the barrier he had erected between men and animals by restricting mind to the former. It was found that even the lowest forms of life do not act in a purely mechanical fashion, but give evidence of rudimentary intelligence. Mind is present in the unicellular organisms. But if it is present there, why not a little lower down in the scale of being? Leibnitz had said that life sleeps in the mineral, dreams in the flower, and wakes in man. If there is life in a stone, why not feeling in a "sensitive" plant, or intelligence in an orchid? All Nature it was said is psycho-physical. Matter is either rudimentary mind or lapsed intelligence. As some supposed that intelligence was inseparable from life, so others held that morality was inseparable from intelligence. Maternal morality began with the plant, paternal morality with the bird. Something like personality belongs to every cell of which the body is composed. The life according to Nature is possible for the teeming millions of little organisms which all unconsciously to us are fulfilling the work allotted to them. They may be living the life according to Nature better even than man.[2]

This is a strange conception of Nature to be advanced in the name of modern science. Morality is taken from man, the crown of Nature's evolution, and given to the

[1] *Morale des Idées-forces*, p. 380. See also Parodi, *Le Problème Moral*, p. 144.

[2] Deshumbert, *Morale fondée sur les lois de la Nature*.

birds and flowers. The tiniest little creatures become man's teachers and Nature's prophets. The "little brothers" of St Francis have received still further honours at the hands of the new Franciscan friars of science. If naturalism of the old type is discredited by such a theory as this, the Idealists, though they wish to discover a spiritual principle in Nature, can hardly be expected to give it their unanimous approval. So Professor Pringle-Pattison concludes "absolutely nothing is gained and much confusion is introduced by resolving external nature into an aggregate of tiny minds, or still worse of small pieces of mind stuff." [1]

Yet Pluralism has commended itself to many as at least a working theory or the best starting-point for an understanding of the mysterious world in which we live. Beginning with the many rather than with the one, and recognising the "upper and the lower limits of pluralism," Professor Ward has found it possible to think of the whole as a realm of ends, at least suggesting a creator whose name is love.[2] And Professor James said that the pluralistic form of Humanism, a form which did not seem to him inconsistent with Theism, made the strongest ethical appeal to him of any philosophy.[3] Professor Dewey has to some extent endeavoured to justify this superior ethical value, finding in the life of the community the symbol of a relationship of the parts to the whole. That perfect whole is outside experience, and yet there comes to men living their separate lives in a pluralistic universe a suggestion or premonition of a unity hidden from their view. "Within the flickering inconsequential acts of the separate selves dwells a sense of the whole, which claims and dignifies them. In its presence we put off mortality and live in the universal." [4] In ethical theories such as this, which speak of "the enduring and comprehending whole," we

[1] *The Idea of God*, p. 189.
[2] *The Realm of Ends*, p. 435.
[3] *Radical Empiricism*, p. 194.
[4] *Human Nature and Conduct*, pp. 332, 330.

seem to have advanced beyond a purely monadistic or pluralistic view of the universe.

Closely associated with a pluralistic view of the world at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth has been the pragmatic method which, "leaving the Absolute to bury the Absolute," has found the test of truth in its workability or practical efficiency. When propounded by C. S. Pierce and William James it was by no means a novelty. The official Christianity of the Middle Ages was pragmatic. Christian theologians as different as Clement of Alexandria, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Pascal had realised its value. But it was given to America, with the genius of whose people it seems to have special affinity, to give it its most forcible and perfect expression.

M. Schinz has said that pragmatism was simply Protestantism disguising itself under a philosophical mask.[1] It is true that Protestantism emphasises the importance of the personal element in religion. It lays stress upon the function of the will in conversion and in faith. It appeals to experience as at least an individual test of truth: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," is Protestant as well as Apostolic teaching. But Protestantism does not start with the human will, with the will of the individual, but with the will and purpose of God as made known in Jesus Christ. The test of truth for the evangelical Protestant is not primarily what he thinks to be right, or what he finds to work, or what gives to him the greatest satisfaction at this or that moment in his ever-changing experience. It is found rather in the pressure upon his conscience of a mind and heart and will which he recognises as greater than his own. It is the Grace of God in Jesus Christ, not primarily his own preference, that decides the issue.

Ethics in the old sense of the word, as a rational explanation and theory of human conduct, has collapsed or, at best, not yet reached its goal. The note of authority,

[1] See Bourdeau, *La Philosophie Affective*, p. 54.

the authority of reason and conscience, is faintly heard in the schools of moral philosophy. In fact, where are those schools? A few years ago M. Parodi said that the Sociologists alone among contemporary philosophers constitute a school. Every other philosopher would appear to be saying that which is right merely in his own eyes.

But if the Sociologists constitute a school, it is because they adopt a common method and content themselves for the most part with the collection and tabulation of facts; not because they have succeeded in creating a science of Sociology. At the beginning of this century M. Seignobos thought that the word itself was in danger of going out of fashion, giving place to a large number of social sciences. And when we remember what Comte himself held with regard to the discontinuity of the sciences this is not remarkable. It may very well be that one all-comprehensive science of social phenomena is an impossible dream. But if achieved it would not be an ethical science in the older sense of the word. It would simply be a science of manners.

This is the way of regarding moral questions adopted by writers like M. Lévy Bruhl. Ethics becomes simply a study of external facts and rules. It ceases to be normative or regulative, and knows no moral imperative. It investigates, analyses, describes, and traces the history of moral phenomena. It does not command. Upon the basis of this positive science we may proceed to construct an art of living, but the art will be of little use since the individual is overpowered by the weight of the moral sentiments of the society to which he belongs. Moral science may illumine the path of life; but it cannot prescribe the course.

So, too, according to Durkheim, Sociology will not teach us what to do, but only what we cannot help doing. Obligation in the old-fashioned sense of the word disappears, and becomes obedience to a rule simply because it is a rule. Obligatory morality is merely institutional or

customary morality. The moral rules of the society to which we belong are the strictly necessary outcome of a psychical power immanent in the social structure, and the individual must submit. It is no longer a question of "ought" but simply of "must." The powers that be are ordained by necessity to enforce the will of society, and enforce it they must. The state must command, and the people must obey.

There are other forms of social theory, for between the extremes represented by Hegel and Schopenhauer, the former so exalting the State as to merge ethics into politics, and the latter so despising it as to make it a manifestation of a collective egoism as immoral as individual egoism, there is room for a great variety of opinions. The mechanical determinism, of which Biology has made us ashamed, comes back in another form in some of the sociological writings of the time. The State, it is said, can neither act morally nor immorally. It simply must act. Ethics has nothing to do with communities. Social science tells us how societies have acted, do act, and will act, not how they ought to act. Sociology then offers us no solution of the moral problem. If it did, it is questionable whether it would be better or worse than an ethic founded on the nature of the individual man. There was some justification for Plato's belief that the Greek State was the individual man "writ large." But it would be difficult to find in the multitudinous and varying customs, laws, and institutions of all the peoples in all the ages any sure indication of how either society or the individual is constituted, and therefore ought to act or even will act. There is no greatest common measure to be obtained. Every man who tries to find it will differ from his neighbour. There is also an unpredictable element in life even as manifested in the most clearly-defined and limited area. And one of the greatest debts we owe to the most attractive French philosopher of our time, M. Bergson, is that he has made it more difficult for sociological determinists to persuade us that they are right. He has helped to keep the way open for an ethic

of freedom rather than of bondage, though I think we must add that his positive contribution to ethical science is small. If the ultimate reality in the universe is change, we can never know that we have a sure foundation for morals. Pessimism is the natural issue of Agnosticism.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MYSTERY OF NATURE AND THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

"TO preach morality is easy; to give it a foundation is difficult," said Schopenhauer. As we look back over the ground so hurriedly traversed and recall the varied attempts of men to find out a way of morality for themselves and to justify it by the light of Nature, we cannot but recognise the truth of this assertion. To find a foundation for morality in "Nature" is one of the hardest tasks a man can undertake, for the simple reason that no one knows what "Nature" is. No system of morals, which rests upon a term so indefinite, fluctuating, and conventional, can rest upon solid ground.

For what is Nature? When we speak of the life according to Nature what do we mean? Is it the nature of things that is meant? Or is it human nature? Or is it both? Is man a part of Nature, or above Nature, or does he partly belong to it and partly transcend it? In any case it is difficult to see how the conduct that is required of him can be adequately and sufficiently described as "natural." If man is not part of Nature there seems to be no reason why the laws of Nature should be introduced into human morals at all. If he is part of Nature, he is presumably the head and not the tail; his function is different from that of any other part of the Body, and from that of the Body as a whole. It might therefore be wrong for him to do what other members of creation do with impunity and without blame; and if there be a whole called "Nature," and man can find out what that whole is and how it functions, it is certainly far from self-evident why

he should imitate it. The law of the whole is not necessarily the law of the parts.

Whether it is ever possible or fitting that the law of the whole should become the law of the parts, could only be known, if that whole were also known. But this is just what it is impossible to be sure about. The one fact which emerges most clearly from a review of philosophical and scientific thought is that man has not yet found out what "Nature" is. It remains to him a mystery, and perhaps the greatest of all mysteries, in the sense of being the least intelligible. He does not know whether "Nature" is a fragment or a whole, whether it is homogeneous or heterogeneous, cosmos or chaos, developing or degenerating, variable or constant, kind or cruel, eternally recurrent or advancing towards some final goal. It is not even certain whether any of the "laws of nature" belong in any sense to it, and are not rather simply ways in which men have come to think about it, or signs of "God's ceaseless conversation with His creatures."

It has not yet been decided by the learned whether "Nature" has any kind of independent or substantive existence, or is merely an imaginary scheme constructed in the supposed interests of reason, or of sentiment, or of practical needs—of any one of these, or of all, or of any combination of them. We have seen strange things in these latter days. The day of the Lord, of which we read in the New Testament, may not yet have come "in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat," [1] but our ideas of "Nature" have been revolutionised and the elements of which it was thought to be composed have been dissolved.

For what has become of matter? It is not now merely the disciples of Berkeley who have annihilated it, but the scientists. "Matter," said Alfred Russel Wallace, "is essentially force, and nothing but force: force is will and nothing but will, and that the will of one Supreme Intelli-

[1] 2 Peter iii. 10.

gence."[1] Or, to take a very different illustration of the hard times upon which "Matter" has fallen, Einstein's theory, according to Sir Oliver Lodge, eliminates matter from the domain of science, resolving it into "a mentally constructed illusion generated by local peculiarities of space."[2] So too energy, that unknown entity, which, to use Professor Baldwin's word, has so long "hypnotised"[3] us is disappearing like matter from the list of ultimate facts of Nature. And as for the "laws" of Nature, "whether it be the principles of Newton," says M. Jean Finot, "or of Lavoisier, the principle of Carnot, or of relativity, the principle of economy of action or of the conservation of energy, all these fundamental premises of modern science tremble on their foundations."[4] Contingency, probability, novelty, creativeness, are introduced into the very heart of "Nature." "It is impossible," says Professor Boutroux, "to work out absolutely the statement that an effect is the unique result of a certain invariable cause. . . . The principles of causality and of the conservation of energy are in themselves scientific shibboleths and neither of them can be worked out so absolutely as to justify themselves as ultimate descriptions of the universe." Again he says: "Mathematics cannot be applied with exactness to reality." So too Professor Poincaré says: "Formulæ are not true; they are convenient."[5]

And with deeper knowledge of the facts treated in the separate sciences there has come a clearer recognition of Comte's meaning, when he spoke of the discontinuity of the sciences. "I should very much like to meet this person called 'science' I hear so much about," said Renouvier.[6] The possibility of one science of Nature is

[1] Quoted by A. J. Schofield, *The Borderlands of Science*, p. 194.

[2] *Nature*, CVI. p. 796.

[3] *Darwin and the Humanities*, p. 91.

[4] *La Science du Bonheur*, p. 78; G. Palante, *Pessimisme et Individualisme*, p. 90.

[5] Boutroux, *La Contingence des Lois de la Nature* See Gunn, *Modern French Philosophy*, pp. 127, 131.

[6] Gunn, *ibid.*, p. 126.

more remote than when Comte wrote. "It is not necessary," says Professor E. W. Hobson, "to assume that Nature can even theoretically be subsumed under a single interconnected rational scheme." [1]

Recent discussions regarding the philosophy of science have not only put many works on miracles out of date, but introduced something very much like miracle into the conception of "Nature" itself. The legalists of Nature are still numerous, and ably uphold the reign of law as it was called in the nineteenth century; but there are those who begin to doubt whether law is the ultimate category applicable to Nature. No system of things or of persons, of which law either in the Mediæval or Cartesian sense is the constitutive principle, whether we call that system Nature or something else, can ever be a faithful image of reality. Life is more than statutes, more than mechanism. In spite of their vagaries we have to thank the Vitalists and even the Amoralists for teaching us that. But they have stopped short almost in sight of the Kingdom of God and have not been violent enough to take it by force.

If, attempting to dismiss from our minds metaphysical questions as to the reality of this hypothetical "Nature," we try to regard "Nature" as an actuality, an appearance, a finite or infinite series of phenomena, what then? How are we to find out anything about it? Some scientists would tell us, just as some of the old mystics did, that we must begin by clearing our minds of all prejudices and preconceived notions, and by a process of κατάφασις strip off every veil from the face of Nature, that we may at length behold her as she is. God is not man, said the mystic; so if we would know Him we must remove the illusory medium of all human attributes and approach the shrine of Deity with the simple word εἰ, "Thou art"; and even that little word does not connote so human and mundane a thing as existence. And mystics of a less extreme Neoplatonic type, like Francis of Assisi, said that a man must make himself barren for the love of God, that is, neglect

[1] *The Domain of Science*, p. 43.

all other kinds of knowledge, if he would receive the mysteries of the Kingdom.[1]

It is so with the mystics of modern science. "Without a thought or wish abiding in the breast," we are to look upon the face of "Nature" and see, or rather become aware of, what is happening. There is something at the terminus of sense-perception, if we could only find out what it is. There are "entities," "facts," "factors," which will authenticate themselves, if we will only stop thinking about them, and forget who we are. It is the intrusion of the ideational, the personal, the human elements, that obscures our vision or dulls our other senses. Be she goddess or will-o'-the-wisp, "Nature" will appeal to us in her own way, not in ours.

But with the instruments at our disposal the listening-in process is extremely difficult. Is "Nature" as so discerned a spatial and temporal order? Are time and space given in sense-perception, and after what manner? "It is hardly more than a pardonable exaggeration," says Professor Whitehead, "to say that the determination of the meaning of nature reduces itself principally to the discussion of the character of time and the character of space." And here he finds himself confronted with "an ultimate mystery." "It is impossible to meditate on time and the mystery of the creative passage of nature (which is only another name for the creative force of existence) without an overwhelming emotion at the limitations of human intelligence."[2]

This may not be the last word of Science on the constitution of Nature, but it is serious enough to show the impossibility at present of making so hazy and indeterminate and mysterious a conception as "Nature" the basis for moral science.[3]

[1] *Mirror of Reflection*, c. 4.

[2] *The Concept of Nature*, pp. 33, 73.

[3] Some eminent scientists, as Professor E. W. Hobson, regard the question of the reality of natural entities as outside the province of physical science. It is sufficient to recognise their conceptual character. *The Domain of Natural Science*, p. 58.

But Nature as understood by a scientist like Professor Whitehead does not represent the whole of reality. "Thought is wider than nature, so there are entities of thought which are not natural entities."[1] Nature is itself so homogeneous that our thoughts must not be included in it. There must be no "bifurcation" of any kind.[2] The philosophers have spoken of Nature as active and passive, *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, *natura ectypa* and *natura archetypa* and so forth; but for the scientist Nature is all of one piece. There are entities which must not be included; for if they should be, her seamless robe would be rent asunder.

But these entities of thought, whatever they may be, thus excluded from the scheme of Nature, will have to be reckoned with, if a man is to be at peace with himself. He may cast out thought and morals from the field of Nature, as understood by science, but he cannot get rid of them. The entities of thought may be more intractable and indestructible than Nature itself. Nature may be non-moral, but the universe is not.

How difficult it is for any of us to be consistent, or content with one rôle! And it is perhaps well that it should be so. Each man in his turn plays many parts. The philosopher does not always think and speak *qua* philosopher. Scientists will sometimes spell Nature with a capital "N," and lapse into poetry or mythology, ascribing moral and personal qualities to "Nature." As Otto said, in speaking of Nature, naturalists often represent it anthropomorphically.[3] They invest the visible order as known to them in sense-perception with the attributes of their own personalities and say with Coleridge: "In ourselves alone does Nature live," or with Emerson: "Nature is not fixed . . . spirit alters, moulds, makes it."

So Professor J. A. Thomson, who has done so much to interest us in Nature, very happily falls into this mood and hears his "system" speaking, and her "three voices

[1] *The Concept of Nature*, *op. cit.*, p. 13. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[3] *Naturalism and Religion*, p. 25.

are: Endeavour, Enjoy, Enquire." [1] But is this natural science? And is this intelligence, or are these exhortations, given by that mysterious entity which exists as the terminus of sense-perception? May it not be that Professor Thomson, like Coleridge, is only receiving from Nature what he has first given to it. The system of Nature which he says he cannot worship because it is "a system," and to which he cannot be grateful because it is "a system," may only be an artificial arrangement that echoes back the human voice that speaks to it. Systems do not speak.

And if we allow ourselves to think thus of "Nature," where are we to stop? And what are we to leave outside its wide domain? Are we to fill it with the contents of our own mind, and make it reflect our every mood? May we ascribe any kind of human qualities to it? This has been called "the pathetic fallacy." Is there any justification for it, or is it merely and always sentimental egoism? Professor A. S. Eddington, speaking not of course of changing feelings but more permanent qualities, tells us that "where science has progressed the farthest, the mind has but regained from nature that which the mind has put into nature. We have found a strange footprint on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories, one after another, to account for its origin. At last we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the footprint. And lo! it is our own." [2]

If physical scientists adopt this anthropomorphic way of interpreting Nature, I do not know why we need object. Words are relatively unimportant, if we understand what we mean. If by Nature we mean the data supplied in sense-perception, worked up by the mind into as orderly a system as possible and clothed with anthropomorphic forms, it is at least an interesting work of the imagination, however indefinite or fluctuating it may be. Only let us be sure that we know what this thing or idea, which we are talking about, is. Before we attempt to live according to

[1] *The System of Animate Nature*, II. p. 652.
[2] *Space, Time and Gravitation*, p. 201.

" Nature," let us be sure that we are not making " Nature " live according to us.

There is one characteristic which is usually ascribed to " Nature," which Professor Thomson thinks belongs properly to it, and is not introduced by the reflecting mind. It is that of order. The result of scientific study has been " the progressive discovery of the orderliness of nature " ; and that order is " intrinsic." It resides in the facts and is disclosed to patient observation. It is not imparted to the facts from without or from above.

But we do not know this in the demonstrative sense of the word " knowledge." It may be an inference, which grows more probable the greater number of facts we observe and the more we think about them in an orderly way. But the same facts looked at by another mind or put into a different context will not produce the same impression. And if order is admitted into " Nature," why not the ultimate mysteries of time and space ? And if these " mysteries " are there, how little do we know of Nature.

The universe also is as yet " unfathomed," and so it is too soon to speak with scientific confidence of the order of the whole. Our little groupings of facts may appear to us quite orderly but only an all-seeing mind can speak of the relation of the groups to the whole. That the world disclosed in sense-perception is a whole, a system, a cosmos, is at best an intuition or belief. And the belief may not be well-founded. Reflecting on the largest whole that was known to him Nietzsche exclaimed : " The general character of the world is to all eternity chaos . . . there are no laws in nature . . . no ends, no eternal substances." [1] Is the patient man of science, or the erratic man of genius, right ? The man of order believes that there is order everywhere, if only he could find it : the man of genius (shall we say disordered genius ?) finds it nowhere.

But Nietzsche is as much a fact of the universe as the most patient scientist, and, even if his opinion is wholly wrong, he has to be explained. Was he however altogether

[1] *La Gaya Scienza*, viii. 109 ; Oscar Levy, x. p. 151.

wrong? The self-complacent man, shutting his eyes to the disorders of the world and the havoc wrought by sin, has no difficulty in saying "Yes." But taking Nietzsche's view of the world as apart from God and without God, not only did Luther and Melancthon and Calvin, and Father Tyrrell, and Pascal and Augustine, say something very much like this, but even the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

The world or universe considered apart from God is not a cosmos. It is chaos or rather it does not exist at all. It is a phantom of the night, as chaotic as dreams are apt to be. If it could be given us to understand what "Nature" is apart from God, we should find it, I suppose, to be nothing but "the baseless fabric of a vision." Its order and coherence are not given to us in sense-perception. Nor are they added to the data by the mind observing or experiencing something. They belong not to "Nature," and not properly speaking to the experient, whether understood as part of "Nature" or transcending "Nature." They are neither "intrinsic," nor are they anthropomorphic additions. The ground of all order is in God. In that sense Nietzsche was right, when he spoke of Nature as being without laws or purpose or substance. These were to him the "shadows of God." He spoke more wisely than he knew. The atheist's world is a lawless world, and exists only in the disordered fancy of the dreamer. Refusing to have God in his thoughts, or in the universe on which he gazed, Nietzsche could see no shadows or trace of law or order or end or purpose. The life according to Nature was for him a life of anarchy and self-will. We have been conducted back again, after our fruitless attempts to find a foundation for morals in "Nature," to the point from which modern empiricism started—the philosophy of Hobbes—but with this great difference that for Nietzsche morality had no foundation in convention or contract or society or politics any more than it had in Nature. Νόμος and φύσις are alike inadequate. The true life is beyond good and evil. It is the will to power.

It is a great relief to turn from the uncertainties of

science and philosophy to the certainties of the Word of God; from an abstract, hypothetical and ever-changing concept like that of "Nature" to the concrete and abiding reality of the Kingdom of God; from a mystery of darkness to a mystery of light.

The Biblical writers have very little to say about "Nature." The word does not occur in the Old Testament and I think that one who was not a Hebrew scholar would find it difficult to translate it into Biblical Hebrew. The idea of a system of sensible reality existing apart from God is foreign to the Old Testament. Though the transcendence of God is emphasised and the Divine Being never confused with the world, His connection with it is always maintained and the visible universe has no unity or existence apart from Him. The phenomena of Nature are signs of His presence.

In the New Testament the word occurs, though not very frequently; and two or three times the Apostle Paul seems to ascribe some kind of moral value to it. He tells us that men may sometimes do by Nature the things contained in the law, that there is a use of the body which is against Nature, and that Nature teaches that it is a dishonour for a man to have long hair.[1] But it would be unfair to press any one of these statements, even the first, into a modern scientific or philosophical context. The Apostle Paul, like other writers of the New Testament, shows little, if any, interest in Nature as a scheme or unity or concept, and no attempt is made to base Christian conduct upon it. Instinct, habit, custom, might have a relative value, even as Jesus had said that "evil" men might know how to give "good" gifts unto their children;[2] but Jesus came to lay a new foundation for the moral life. Men were to become a new creation in Him. The man who identified himself with the visible world and lived as though it were the real, was merely a "natural" man, a "physical" or "psychical" man, not a "spiritual" man. He who thinks of himself as part of Nature cannot receive

[1] Rom. ii. 14; i. 27; 1 Cor. xi. 14. [2] Matt. vii. 11.

the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. He must be regenerated or introduced into a new creation. The world, considered apart from God and without God, is in the bondage of corruption and subjected to purposelessness or vanity.[1]

Instead of an abstract scheme of "Nature" or confused anthropomorphic representations formed by introducing human attributes good or bad, the Bible gives us "the Kingdom of God." That is the foundation of the moral life, at once a concept and an actuality, and therefore a possible object of experience for a rational being. It expresses the truth and grace of Jesus Christ. It comes to those who are the called of God "not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance."[2] No one who has truly received the Gospel can doubt that it is the Gospel of an eternal Kingdom, a Kingdom of truth and fellowship, of light and love. He has been "translated out of the power of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son of His love."[3]

It hardly seems desirable to linger here in order to ask whether the word "Nature" might be so interpreted as to bring it into line with the Christian conception of the Kingdom of God. Something has been said in the foregoing pages regarding the views of "Nature" taken by Christian men. The illustrations have been all too few, for the subject is immense. But it is really subsidiary to the main purpose of the book, which is to give some account, descriptive and historical, first of the Ethics of the Gospel, and then of attempts which have been made to find the foundations of morality in "Nature" alone, understood in the narrower and wider senses of that much abused word. The first type of ethics, which is based on the Biblical idea of the Gospel, seems to me to be the only one which rests upon a solid foundation; the second appears to have collapsed, and the more often it recovers and confronts its rival the weaker it appears.

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 14; 2 Cor. v. 17; Rom. viii. 20, etc.
[2] 1 Thess. i. 5.
[3] Col. i. 13.

Morality is so important an interest for mankind that it ought to be known to rest on the broadest and surest foundations. This at once rules out all the departmental sciences such as physics, chemistry, biology and psychology. These sciences regard the universe of reality each from its own point or points of view, and even if any one of them, psychology for example, had reached conclusions that might reasonably be regarded as well-authenticated and final, it would be too narrow a foundation on which to build the edifice of morality. An ethic which is supposed to rest on psychology, not to say biology or physics, would be as insecure as a pyramid resting upon its apex. If ethics does not itself represent the fullness of reality, it can only securely rest on something that does, that is on religion. The science of religion, which in this sense includes theology, is the only adequate foundation for morals, because the religious experience rests upon the truth and fact of Jesus Christ, "the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

It will be said that this is mere dogmatism or hypothesis. But, even if this should be so, are theologians the only persons who may not frame hypotheses? Are they alone precluded from accepting a doctrine which seems to them to explain the facts of experience better than any other? If Huxley or Haeckel or Comte, why not Tertullian or Ambrose or Augustine; if Darwin, why not the Apostle Paul? We have seen that the positivism of Comte, which is really in his case only another name for dogmatism, deliberately excludes the facts of religious experience which were vouched for by the saints of his own Calendar. If that is not disingenuousness, is it not folly? The saints may be nearer the truth than the men who worship them. Interpretations of the universe which are based upon Christian experience and the fact of Christ may not be self-evidently true at once and to all. No man we are told can call Jesus "Lord" but in the Holy Ghost.[1] But interpretations of the universe which deliberately ignore

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 3.

the Christian facts can never attain to the rank of scientific or rational theories.

The theologians of the Christian Church have maintained that the universe is incomplete and unintelligible without Christ, that it could not indeed exist apart from Him. "In Him," said the Apostle Paul, "all things hold together."[1] "He upholds all things by the word of His power." "Though we see not yet all things put under Him we see Him crowned with glory and honour and seated at the right hand of power."[2] Creation would have been meaningless had not the Lamb been slain from the foundation of the world.[3] The love which in the fullness of time was manifested on the Cross, is recognised by the conscience as the holiest, strongest thing in human experience, and so it is no mere guess that it was the motive and agency in the creation of the world. The Redeemer of the World was its Creator. The new creation furnishes the key which unlocks the mysteries of the old creation. One has been found worthy to open the seven seals of the book revealing the mind of the Creator, and every created thing in the heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea and all things that are in them are heard to say: "Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever."[4]

In the early period of the Church it occurred to some to ask whether Creation or Redemption was the greater work, and the tendency of the Arian and Semi-Arian mind was to answer in favour of the former. Creation, as preeminently the work of the Father, was the diviner exercise of power. They hesitated to ascribe equal honour to Jesus Christ as Redeemer or to the Holy Ghost as the sanctifying Spirit. Redemption and holiness seemed to them less imposing than Creation. They would have found no difficulty in putting a meaning, their own meaning, into Huxley's celebrated dictum: "The mysteries of the

[1] Col. i. 17.
[2] Heb. i. 3; ii. 8, 9.
[3] Rev. xiii. 8.
[4] Rev. v. 5, 13.

Church are child's play compared with the mysteries of nature." The works of Nature seemed more wonderful to them than the works of grace. But, thanks largely to Athanasius, the conscience of the Church asserted itself and refused to say that the salvation of a soul and the creation of a holy character was a meaner work than the creation of the world. Athanasius however was himself a Greek, and the process of moralising Christianity remained incomplete. It was carried further by Augustine. But naturalism reasserted itself powerfully in the Roman Church. The Kingdom of God was interpreted in terms of "Nature," and the miracles too often reputed the greatest were non-moral.

But the conception of a universe of reality larger than "Nature" was never lost. When we remember the Greek view of the eternity of matter and the fixity of the natural order; and also the Roman disposition to translate everything, even the most sacred relationships of life, into terms of law and contract and external ordinances, it is nothing short of a miracle that the Apostolic idea of the Kingdom of God survived.

But it did survive. And the deepest thinkers felt that at the heart of what men called "Nature" there was something else which others did not recognise, a realm within which God's more intimate presence was manifested, an eternal Kingdom which made the institutions of men and the so-called ordinances of "Nature" appear unreal and transient. To Origen, for example, the whole universe seemed pervaded by the power and Logos of God, which was like a living soul in an otherwise mortal body. Ambrose, in less philosophical but more religious and practical manner, keeping nearer to historical facts, expressed his belief that the whole creation was somehow implicated in the death and victory of Jesus Christ. Augustine believed that the nature of things (*rerum natura*) was only another name for the will of God, and tried to revive the New Testament conception of the City of God as the revelation and consummation of the eternal purpose

of God. John Scotus Erigena thought that the largest universe of reality was that revealed in Christ, and wished to call it Nature. "The Word is the nature of all things, nothing is supernatural." Raymund de Sabunde, towards the close of the Middle Ages, may be regarded by some as the father of natural religion, but probably his high estimate of the revelation in Nature is due to his abounding gratitude to Jesus Christ as Redeemer, and he should therefore be regarded as one who interpreted "Nature" through Christ rather than as one who was led "through Nature up to Nature's God."

It is the revelation of God in human-wise, which we find throughout the Old Testament and which culminated in the Word made flesh, which explains, or at least enlightens, the dark mysteries of the world in which we live. In and through that revelation there has come to the minds of men the idea of a universe infinitely larger than that disclosed in sense-perception or mirrored in the imagination of this or that particular thinker. The whole course of philosophy shows that men's views of the universe depend upon individual peculiarities of talent and of temperament, and yet the conviction somehow survives that man—man in the aggregate if not the individual man—is the measure of the universe. Sometimes he is spoken of as the product of Nature or as the crown of Nature, and "the mirror in which she, in a sense, can regard herself." [1] Such metaphorical language as this is to my mind misleading, and such anthropomorphism partial and inadequate. It appears to me to be neither science nor theology, but mythology. But it testifies to the conviction that if any interpretation of the sum-total of reality is possible, it must be in human terms. That too is the Christian belief, but He who is the measure of the universe is the Man Christ Jesus, not the individual man, and not the collective wisdom of the ages. According to the Apostolic teaching it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell,

[1] The phrase is Professor J. Y. Simpson's, *The Spiritual Interpretation of Nature*, 3rd ed., p. 221.

and the mystery of His will that He would sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth.[1]

Yet these bright assurances are an incentive to Christian conduct rather than the foundation of Christian morals. The Ethics of the Gospel rest upon the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the Cross and His victory over sin and death. The Gospel is the good news of something that has happened. By that victory men's views of righteousness and of the moral universe were transformed and the Kingdom of Heaven was opened to all believers.

[1] Col. i. 19; Eph. i. 10; cp. Heb. i. 8; xii. 28; Acts iii. 21; Rev. i. 18, xxi. 1, etc.

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